

ENGAGING THE AFRICAN AMERICAN CONGREGATION
IN A SHARED PROCESS OF
OUTREACH MINISTRY

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ABSTRACT

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The project was designed to address the need for the African American church community of Love Zion Baptist Church in Columbus, Ohio to be more sensitive to the needs of the suffering community at large, internally and externally. Fifteen structured field visits were developed and implemented with a group of congregants to enhance their sensitivity toward suffering by focusing on two areas of outreach ministry - hunger and incarceration. The learning was framed by Scripture, theology, and the actionable responses of the congregants. Results of the model, evaluated by qualitative analysis instruments, show that congregants were expanded in basic consciousness and inspired to be more actionable in outreach ministry.

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PREFACE

Outreach ministry is of the liberation theology motif. It can also be said that outreach ministry is sociological in the respect that it fills a void where there is an obvious need. As described in Abraham Maslow's "Hierarchy of Needs," one cannot move to a social position in life until basic physiological needs are met. This research and conclusion helps to formulate outreach and mission strategy by bridging the gap between the needs and the wants that are operative in one's life. If we are to be effective in reaching the oppressed, we must be willing to consider some of their basic needs before we can think about sharing the gospel. As the definition of outreach ministry is expanded the implications are conveyed as the needs of the community. The church must be sensitive to the needs of the whole community if the church is to be a refuge for the weary soul. Jesus had passion for the oppressed and His actionable strategy was carried out according to His purpose for coming into our sphere. He came to set captives free and to legitimize those whom society has relegated to nothingness.

The mission strategy and outreach enthusiasm in the Church have not been favorable in breaking down the walls that separate the poor and oppressed. Some congregations vacillate between a fundamentalist view of denying the reality of liberation theology altogether and taking a passive role in changing the status quo. To be sure, few if any churches today have total

immunity from problems related to law enforcement and other community distresses. The crime rate is high and rising. What are the churches doing? What can they do?

Too often we Christians hate the sinner rather than the sin. We must learn to affirm the sinner, while disclaiming the sinful acts. There is a pressing need to understand the dynamics of sin and the position in life that sin leaves some individuals. Where else can a sinner go for help, if not to the church? We need to extend our ministry to assist these persons. Our worship could be more conducive in bringing about healing for individuals and the community.

I must confess that my travels in the Air Force afforded me the opportunity to see the many variations of worship services in African American Churches. As I moved about responding to assignments, I found that the Lord was allowing me to see something that would raise my concern for the oppressed. I saw some congregations with great outreach and mission strategy and some with no focus on outreach at all. Some congregations were more in tune with an emotional hour on Sunday morning where individuals could find quick, but unfortunately temporary, relief from the woes of life.

In particular, I noticed that some congregations were friendly and others were not. To be honest, some congregations were more inclusive than others. There were congregations where I needed my college education just to know what was being said. Some places I visited, I truly felt that I was not dressed well enough for the occasion. From my childhood it was understood that worship in the Black Church is more often than not a joyful experience. It is joyful

because Blacks experience a sense of freedom seldom felt in the everyday struggles of dealing with racism and various forms of injustice. I simply believed that the struggle linked African Americans together in solidarity, if no other place, at least in the church.

In the Black Church, we are people of the “struggle” regardless of our status in society. We have the common thread of slavery and emancipation to remind us of a reality that is conveyed in the following words: “We are not free as individuals until we all are free.” Based on this presupposition, Black professionals could be in community with welfare recipients in a meaningful worship service. I found this to be true in some congregations and forbidden in others through language barriers, education, material wealth, and social dispositions in life. The congregations where there were large numbers of individuals who had lost their connection with “suffering” often times had no outreach ministries operative or mission strategy. That is not to say that they were not supporters of the larger church’s foreign mission, but many were lacking in “hands on” strategy in winning souls to Christ. The absence of the issue of “suffering” tends to lessen the impact on individuals to be compassionate.

It is out of my own personal experiences and struggles in life that I feel a personal connection to the poor and oppressed. I have looked into the eyes of hopelessness and felt challenged and compelled to perfect change. I see the urgency in pushing for that quality of life that our Lord said that He would give. I see social ministries as catalysis in ushering in God’s kingdom. How can one

hear the "good news" with other more pressing needs? But the real question is, how do we empower the Black Church to be active in the many dimensions of outreach ministry? If "suffering" is disproportionate in the African American community by way of incarceration, gang violence, drug abuse, and homelessness, then our presence must be disproportionate in bringing about wholeness and wellness. The answer lies in one's level of compassion. How do you change one's level of compassion? I see the need to raise awareness and sensitivity by the use of a well thought out strategy that affords congregants the opportunity to come face to face with hopelessness.

TO

Billy and Danny

My late brothers who gave me so much, so often

INTRODUCTION

Today, as in former days, The Black Church stands in the midst of a community that is in physical, emotional, and economic pain. African Americans who hurt come to the Black Church for help. Suffering is not new to the Black community, and the ministries of relief and healing are not new to the Black Church. The Black Church was born in the midst of painful circumstances and has survived through centuries of it, helping those who were in pain to survive. Through the social service ministries of the Black Church, the Lord has reached out and drawn people to Himself.

However, the social service mission of the Black Church has recently become a controversial topic. The question of how and whether the Black Church should continue to concern itself with the affairs of this world has become the center of many heated debates. Most of the controversy revolves around the question of whether the church should relate to human needs, if those needs cannot be classified as strictly spiritual ones.

On one side of the controversy are those who believe that a church's only responsibility is to provide a facility wherein people can meet the Lord, worship, study the Bible, and pray. Some people who take this position also believe that it is not the church's responsibility to provide social services such as counseling,

education, and physical necessities (such as food, clothing, shelter, and medical / social agency referrals). To involve the church in these areas, they argue, would be to involve the church with the world, from which (they believe) it is to remain separate.

Characteristically, churches that subscribe to this viewpoint have few if any outreach ministries. If they do, the ministries take the form of evangelism programs which present Scriptures to hurting people through camp meetings, prison ministries, and Gospel tract ministries. These ministries do not attempt to relate to needs which cannot be strictly classified as spiritual. On the other side of the controversy are those who believe that evangelism is the primary mission of the Black church, but that evangelism cannot be separated from the social service mission of the church. In other words, they argue that it cares about how that person is getting along in this world.

People who take this position usually also believe that once the person has established a relationship with the Lord, the church must continue to minister to the "whole," "born-again" person, rather than to the spiritual dimension of that person only. Characteristically, churches with this viewpoint have active social service ministries. These include housing ministries for senior citizens, tutorial ministries for students, employment ministries, shelters, food pantries, soup kitchens, and counseling ministries. Such churches usually have a variety of educational programs and a variety of programs for youth. Larger churches with such programs have been called "super churches."

My model-in-ministry project is designed to reengage people to be more concerned about helping hurting people. It is designed to empower people in local churches who come into contact with hurting people. Every day, thousands of hurting people reach out to churches throughout the country. In the Black community, the Black Church has played a special role in this respect. In some communities, the Black Church may be the only institution of hope still standing. Therefore, it is the purpose of this project to provide the types of insights that are commonplace in the lives of hurting people and will cause congregants in local churches (Black Churches in particular) to be actionable in ministering to hurting people in a more effective way by raising the level of consciousness and elevating the level of compassion.

However, the project can also be used in mission work.

I have had some days in my life where we had too much month and not enough money to live the same quality of life for the entire month. I have looked into the eyes of people in despair. I have also looked out of eyes of despair as I personally encountered growing up in a house with an alcoholic dad. I have, as have others, come to the body of Christ, with a history checkered with pain, loss, and scars. I have buried loved ones. I have said reluctant goodbyes to friends who influenced my life.

It is this journey which informs my present ministry emphasis, and which has focused my gaze upon reaching people who are known as the unloved, the hopeless of society and who are easily forgotten as people rise in prosperity. I

have known what it means to be wedded to a community, to be inextricably bound by love and by covenant to a “family,” and to experience the isolation that comes with the family’s inability to reach one in one’s pain.

This project also attempts to reinforce the positive, growth-producing aspect of “team-ministry” which is often viewed with skepticism by African American pastors who are concerned with “hands-on” control of their people and their programs. As with the aforementioned groups, this project presents an opportunity to “equip the saints for the work of ministry,” and to cause the needs of the suffering to be recognizable.

This project is designed to:

1. Offer a conceptual framework and an experiential and ongoing model for the church to become acquainted with issues which inevitably must confront each of her members;
2. Facilitate church members to have “hands on” and “up close” encounters with the disenfranchised; and to be ambassadors of hope, comfort, and binders of the broken hearted.
3. To mobilize the laity of the church to minister to itself while reaching others who have greater needs.

This project attempts to rekindle the common thread of connectedness in the plan of salvation by insisting that the suffering of Christ is inclusive. We must invite all to “come.” Sorrowing, and “heavy-laden,” the brokenhearted are still invited to come and to discover a yoke that is easier and a burden that is

light. I am proceeding from the premise that it is the intention of a loving God to mend the broken creation. In Jesus Christ the reality has been ushered in, and God works the healing process. It may be, however, that the very guardians of the message of healing (church leadership), may unwittingly be the very barriers to the mediation of that healing. Those persons who are "called to ministry" do not necessarily become equipped to minister to the suffering by virtue of the call. Nor does formal training necessarily call forth the healing gifts, or the healing sensitivities, though they may be resident within the minister.

The purpose of this project is to present a model in ministry that is relevant, transferable, and meaningful for today's times. The proposition is taken from the words of our Lord in Matthew 25:31f: "When I was hungry" It focuses on impacting the local community on several fronts in a bi-strategical way. First, we must raise/elevate the sensitivity of the congregants at Love Zion Baptist Church while creating an outreach ministry that will bring relief to weary souls.

I truly believe that we are "shaped in the crucible of human experiences" and the totality of who we are is shaped by behavioral responses that we have encountered. For example, my twenty three years in the Air Force have had a tremendous impact on the way I do ministry. During my career I was called on to present briefings or motivational speeches. Most of the technique works well in preaching. However, the point I want to make is that my career exposed me to many aspects of worship in that I moved around to various states and some

overseas areas. In living on the Eastern Seaboard, the Midwest and the South, one thing was common in the numerous African American congregations that I attended. There was not a lot of mission activity. The church is called to action as a body. There are many gifts that the Lord, by His grace gives to the church for the work of ministry. Yet, our focus seems to be more directed to building funds, as if this clarion call to be a light to those in darkness was just casually given by our Lord.

My purpose is not to discount the forward progress of the Black Church, but I am attempting to raise the level of sensitivity and its consciousness. If the African American church of the twenty first century is going to meet her new challenges, we the members must be willing to progressively move toward strategies that will "set captives free." The Welfare Reform Bill is just one example of new challenges that will be put on the church, whether we like it or not. Let's face it! If the government abandons families leaving even more homeless and hopeless, where will families turn? Are we prepared to meet the call?

I absolutely do not believe that the Black Church is a non caring community. Let me be clear on that one point. But how do we really feel about a "suffering" community? Have we as a people become insensitive to the struggle because of our individual prosperity? It is the intention of my project to deal with the area of sensitivity while establishing an actionable approach to ministry. I have selected a passage where several separate outreach ministries could be

developed. However, I have narrowed my focus to two areas that describe the paradigm. The paradigm will act as a “turn-key” for the other ministries which I will highlight only as a means to show the direction that the project could take when fully developed.

To be sure, it will take the combined efforts of African American churches in the quest to bring healing and wholeness to its members and others who would be reached by the aid of the Holy Spirit to bring about radical change in our mission approach. This project will describe the procedures that may be used to institute and create outreach ministries and reintegrate the Love Zion Baptist Church. The bottom line purpose of this project is to provide local churches with a practical guide for developing and implementing outreach ministries in the local Black Church. Also, this project can be used to train lay persons to effectively help meet the growing needs in the communities the Black Church may serve.

In chapter one, I deal with this problem of sensitivity in the Black Church. I have defined the area of ministry which my focus in ministry will address. I believe that many of our sociological woes are predicated upon two principles that are prevalent in our society. First, the Black Church has lost some of the influence in the shaping of the Black community. Second, the disproportionate number of problem areas for members of the Black community has rendered the church helpless in dealing with so many needs.

My work as minister at Love Zion Baptist Church and as chaplain at

Children's Hospital coupled with my own background of suffering in the midst of quality worship has allowed me to address the issue of raising the level of consciousness in the African American congregation.

In chapter two, I have expanded the definition of mission and suffering. In my understanding of suffering, it can be said that an individual or a congregation can be compelled to take action. I have used this chapter to expand what actionable ministries are imperative for us to be the church that the Lord commissioned us to be. In chapter three, my theological view is predicated on the gospel of Matthew, chapter 25, verses 31 - 40. In this chapter, I expounded on the past, present, and futuristic interpretation of this text in light of a suffering community.

In chapter four, I have expounded on the "model-in-ministry" that will be used as an approach to present the problem. This chapter contains the various steps central to the design and the methodologies of this project.

In chapter five I expound on exactly what I set out to do in relation to what I "ended up" with. The data collection methods as well as data analysis are discussed in detail, with a full explanation of the results of this model in ministry.

The conclusions that are drawn in chapter six make this project adaptable to any church setting. I discuss my findings, directions, and potential replication of a project that will enhance the call to any Christian.

CHAPTER I

IN SEARCH OF ANSWERS ON THE ROAD TO MINISTRY

In 1964, as I was in transition to high school, I had an intense fear of the future because of the tragic events that were commonplace in the society in which I lived. Prior to starting that school year my family received tragic news of the death of my elder brother who was only nineteen years old. He had been an academic hero known throughout the whole county and was noted for his brilliance in a diversity of subjects. He had turned down numerous scholarships to enter the Air Force and now a freak accident had taken his life. We were all devastated. Days later we had a funeral for Billy; however, it was a closed casket funeral. Because of the way things were handled, we did not believe that Billy was in that box. For example, there were at least two different stories detailing what had happened. It is a natural part of the death process to be in denial, but we were locked in a state of denial because we needed to see a body in order to confirm his death.

On July 7, 1994, my youngest brother Danny (thirty eight years old), and I visited Billy's grave site to do some landscaping. While there, we talked about our pain, denial, and expectations and discovered that we both had similar

dreams and expectations about Billy. Finally, after almost thirty years we started to say, "I guess he's really dead and will not come walking in the door with some fantastic story of a clandestine Air Force mission." Although somewhat delayed, finally accepting the reality of Billy's death allowed me to move into the next phase of the grief process. Although, I had not considered myself dysfunctional, I knew deep down that I had not brought closure to the situation. That day we started to accept that his death was real. What a day of progress in the healing process! We had really made headway by just talking and sharing. I considered that time in July the best family reunion that I had ever experienced. I went back home to Ohio with a refreshed outlook on life knowing that I had allowed myself to give way to some healing that had precluded my real happiness for nearly thirty years.

On August 24, 1994, only four weeks after the visit to Billy's grave site, Danny died of a massive heart attack. Grieving and in shock, I was nevertheless, given the honor of preaching his eulogy. Although his death was so unbelievable, it serves as a reminder that life is too unpredictable to not live it to the fullest. I also learned that grief is an ongoing process. Danny and I had made plans to plant flowers the next year on Billy's grave not knowing that he (Danny), would only be with us just a few more weeks. How does all of this influence my call to ministry? Well, it certainly says that all loss must be grieved and that grief is a process that requires sharing and dialoguing between those who have experienced suffering. And lastly, pain, hurt, and unanswerable

questions shape and alter our direction in search of answers. What I have learned from these experiences is helping to define my ministerial identity. I now have better understanding and enhanced sensitivity for the pain and suffering experienced by others when they lose a loved one. This understanding puts me in a better position to minister to them; to have more empathy; more knowledge of what they need from me in order to go through the grieving process and conclude it with their faith in the Lord still strong. I often ponder my faith story and I ponder the pain that others feel when their losses are somehow proliferated. My loss of two brothers and the pain that I still feel could be worse. I do not mean to communicate a position that will diminish the suffering that a person goes through in the loss of a loved one, but my point is that one can have a multiplicity of losses that seem to snowball. A loss of health, the loss of the use of a limb, the inability to do what used to be common, and the loss of one's family security system are just a few examples. The list goes on. What I want to communicate is that there are multitudes of people trapped in denial because their losses and pain have rendered them helpless, hopeless, and unable to cope with life.

Struggle: Shaped by the Negative

I guess that deep down I have always been hurt by the inexplicable things in life. For example, I experienced overt racism while living in the south. My parents divorced, at which time we moved to rural Alabama to live with my

grandmother. The adjustment was hampered by White kids who made it their business to let us know that we were not welcomed. Seeing the segregated water fountains and bathrooms, I knew that something was gravely wrong with the world in which I lived. I attended a Black segregated school, where ironically, Elvis was a hit. We had to learn how to square dance. Also, it was no secret that having a lighter shade of skin was an asset that provided certain advantages. It became clear to me that we were a people without an identity.

At an early age I pondered the issue of inequality. Then I remembered how evil people spat on, cursed, and killed Jesus in the name of righteousness. My major concern was to try to make sense out of what I perceived Christians to be, and what I saw coming forth from, and seemingly endorsed by the church. As I grew older, I started to understand more and more that people had taken the concept of Christianity to promote their own agendas. As a youngster, I knew that there had to be more to life than to live in hell and have the expectation of real life after death.

While growing up, there were many sad times, but some happy days in spite of the chaos in which I lived. For example, I remember what a strong, outspoken, and domineering person my grandmother was. Everybody loved her and understood that she was the way she was because we affirmed her position in the family structure. She was a midwife and a faithful believer who was temperamental, but we knew beyond doubt that she was the matriarch in our family system. Her grandfather was Cherokee and her grandmother was a

slave. I remember her talking about the stories that had been passed down to her, but we were too brainwashed and accommodating to the society in which we lived to really listen and put the stories on paper. When she found herself with no grandchildren to advise or shape amidst a family that had moved out into many parts of the nation, she knew that her time had come to make the transition. I remember the family saying that "she just gave up and died." Later, Alex Haley published "Roots" and I was disheartened because I had allowed my connection to the past to die without learning from her the stories about my people, my tribe, my past.

I remembered the trials and tribulations that I went through living in the house with an alcoholic father who was a victim of the system. He was oppressed by a racist society and was discouraged by the outcome of the oppression. The only solution, at least from his point of view, was to turn to the bottle in an attempt to suppress what he was feeling. Thank God he was not violent, but he was a broken man who failed at nearly everything he tried. My parents divorced when I was about nine years old. My sister, brothers, and I stayed with my mother who was the daughter of my high-spirited grandmother. I believe I can safely say that my pain and motivation factors are one and the same and have made me sensitive toward the issues of social injustice. I don't believe in happenstance, but rather that certain indigenous behavior paradigms are the result of coping mechanisms.

In my search for answers I have come to the conclusion that much of the

driving force and motivation for my project is born out of a need to minister to others as well as be ministered to. God has put me in a position to be motivated by the need to be heard and to make an impact on the context of where I minister. In this search, I ponder a working definition for reconciliation. If when sin entered the world as described in the Bible and had an impact on the whole of creation, how is the reconciliatory work of Christ carried in the community? In my context I believe that I, as an individual, as well as the African American community, need to survive and must reclaim self respect. I believe that survival techniques and self respect can be attained and maintained if individuals allow themselves to be positively motivated by the negative things that are commonplace in our society. It was instilled in my brothers and sister and me that as we struggle we should have a winning spirit in spite of the circumstances. For instance, we moved to another state believing that it was God's will, even though it was painful to leave our dad. We agreed with our mother about the need for change, but that decision did not negate our love for our father. And there we were, five more children without a father, in the midst of a confused place with our hearts broken because of the loss of our security, and the degradation of being relegated to second class citizenship in the South. It was in the midst of this pain that we found, in a little country church, reconciliation perfected at the cross, confirmed in Christ's resurrection, and experienced in the church that the Holy Spirit reunites the world with God for the glory of the Father. New life and new hope were now communicated to us by the preaching of the

gospel in the power of the Spirit through the life and mission of the church. We knew that it was and is the Holy Spirit who gives meaning and energy even to oppressed Black people who are the social outcast, the unloved, and the so-called "fractional humans."

Divine Intervention

As I reflect on my call to ministry, I remember several close calls that I now interpret as God saving me for the purpose of preaching the gospel. The first story takes me back to high school. I played in a very decent band and was returning from a "gig" one foggy night when an accident occurred. I remember straining to see in fog that you could cut with a knife. Suddenly, the fog lifted and the road took a sharp turn. All I could see was water straight ahead and I knew that I could not swim, so, I made several attempts to avoid crashing and somehow the car ended up on its side after flipping several times. The amazing thing was that George, the guitar player, who was on the front seat, had shifted places with the bass drum that was on the back seat. The miracle was that he was not hurt nor was the drum damaged. Not even United Van Lines could move a bass drum from the back to the front seat of a passenger car. We sustained no injuries in the accident. The one thing that is remembered most about the accident is the fact that we found a cross fastened to the fender of the car. I don't know how it got there, but for me it was a sign that the Lord had spared me for a purpose.

The other example of how I interpreted God saving me for the purpose of preaching the gospel is an incident that happened to me when I was in the Air Force and assigned in Japan. My dependents were allowed to go with me on this assignment, however, I initially went alone to find a place to live. I found a place within a few months, and waited for my family to join me. In February the climate in the area was tropical-damp and chilly. I arrived home to a chilly house so I decided to fire-up my kerosene heater. I remembered for a minute the initial orientation: "We lose at least fifty Americans from smoke inhalation each year because of improperly serviced heaters, so be cautious." After lighting up my heater, I thought that I would get into bed while the house heated up. Well, wouldn't you know it? I fell asleep in a few minutes. While I slept, the heater was burning rawly, filling the house with thick black smoke. There I was with everything to live for: a beautiful wife, a one year old son, and a bright Air Force career ahead of me. Yet I was slowly sinking into eternity. I liken the whole event to Paul's writings in the book of Ephesians, the second chapter where Paul described the whole of the human race. As Paul implied, we were moving in a direction that opposed God, energized by the spirit of disobedience. We "were by nature the children of wrath, but God, who is rich in mercy has made us alive together with Christ."

I can use that reference because I'm here today to talk about that close call. As I said, I was slipping into eternity, but God sent a lizard (gecko) down to my bed to wake me up. This gecko screamed out loud enough to wake the

dead. Its sounds went out as “gecko!” “gecko!” “gecko!” And were received as “Bennie!” “Bennie!” Get up! I ran out of the house with just enough oxygen to make it to safety. The gecko perhaps did not make it for I never found its body, but I am forever grateful to the obedience of that gecko who listened to the voice of God even though it probably meant giving up all that it had to give.

I preached a sermon on this event because I truly see God's intervention in my life. The sermon title is "But God`." As you perhaps noticed, I speak of this sermon in the present. Well, that is because it will forever be my testimony, the message of my life. It is, and will continue to be used to explain and demonstrate my relationship to a loving Savior who snatched me back for a divine purpose.

The Urban Vineyard

My context of ministry is the local church community--Love Zion Baptist Church where I serve as Director of Missions. Because my “model-in-ministry” focuses on the concept of outreach ministries, attention will be directed to two facilities important to implementing my project strategy that are located within, or adjacent to, our neighborhood. They are Faith Mission, a homeless shelter facility, and the Franklin County Juvenile Detention Center.

As I think about the rationale for my project, I see a twofold mission in developing a model in ministry project that is raising consciousness and seeking to compel an actionable approach to outreach ministry at Love Zion. There is a

need in the city of Columbus and Franklin County for the church to be more than just a place where the body of Christ worships. We have been challenged by the words of our Lord to show mercy because mercy has been shown to us. My focus for Love Zion is to have visibility and presence in areas of the local community where people are hurting, oppressed, and poor in spirit. For example, the poverty in Franklin County correlates directly with the level of homelessness in the county. The percentage of people living below the federal poverty level rose to 13 percent in 1989, from 12.3 percent in 1979. The Council for Economic Opportunities recently estimated that Franklin County had a 1993 poverty rate of 18.1 percent, a rate higher than the state's overall rate.

Sociological Analysis

Love Zion Baptist Church (population zone thirty seven) is a predominantly Black congregation in an inner city neighborhood located on the near east side of Columbus, Ohio. The church is only eight minutes from downtown Columbus, and only three minutes from Park Medical Hospital. It sits in the heart of a residential district and is bounded by single family dwellings on all sides. It is in close proximity to several key community facilities. It is only one block from Fair Avenue Alternative Arts Impact School, a school which we have adopted as a part of our Outreach Ministry. We utilize the school for community health fairs, and the gymnasium for our church basketball teams. We provide transportation services to these facilities on various occasions, and work closely

with them on other projects. The Church is within walking distance of Franklin Park. Joggers make use of the park. Franklin Park with its numerous recreational facilities and programs, was the site of an international Garden and Flower Show held April - October, 1992.

The neighborhood has experienced a slow but dramatic change over the years, and has lost the flavor that gave it such prestige many years ago. Many of the homes are brick and at one time were owned by the more wealthy families of Columbus society. When Love Zion came into this community, it was a predominantly white community, and since has made a drastic change.

There are churches of all faiths in this quadrant of the city; however, a large number of our members live outside the immediate vicinity of the Church. Most of our members drive to and from Church, but a small percentage are picked up by the Church bus.

The immediate community around Love Zion is predominantly black. Some are single family homeowners while others are low income renters. The community has witnessed a decline in property values, and is troubled by the presence of crack and cocaine, as well as a number of vacant and abandoned houses. Although the community is predominantly Black, it is also a culturally diverse neighborhood, being modestly mixed with white, Asian, Indian, and Hispanic families.

The community is ripe for evangelistic and outreach activities. We have prioritized children and their parents within the five to forty-four age bracket for

outreach activities. The population age ranges within the boundaries of a two-mile radius of the Church are as follows:

Population by age:	under 5 years	7.7%
	15 -19 years	7.3%
	20 -24 years	8.3%
	25 -29 years	8.8%
	30 -34 years	8.7%
	35 -44 years	12.9%
	median age	33 years
	average age	36 years

In spite of the drugs present and some abandoned homes, this community is known for its stability, as evidenced by the fact that 53% of the 29,565 occupied units are owner occupied. Further, 74% of all units are single family dwellings. Additionally, 81% of all households are family households. The neighborhood continues to grow and is becoming even more stabilized every day with new residents acquiring and rehabilitating vacant properties. Currently, city rehabilitation dollars have been earmarked for home improvement and the neighborhood has been selected as a target area. The area has also been previously designated an historic preservation area.

Politically the community is very active. It is a part of the Near East Area Commission, one of six city commissions established by City Council as a review board to regulate planning and developmental activities in the neighborhood.

There is an extremely close working relationship between the Church, the Near East Area Commission and other community based organizations. In many instances the Church takes the lead on a variety of community issues. The Church has a good working relationship with the Mayor's office, members of the City Council and other political entities. Although a Democratically controlled Council, ironically, the city consistently elects a Republican Mayor and is dominated at the county level by Republican office holders and Republican judges.

The Congregation

The Love Zion Baptist Church is affiliated with several denominational bodies, including: National Council of Churches, Lott Carey Foreign Missions Convention, National Baptist Convention USA, Inc., American Baptist Churches, Ohio Baptist Convention, Ohio Baptist General Convention, Columbus Baptist Association, and the Eastern Union Missionary Baptist Association.

Love Zion has traditionally been a family oriented Church. The congregational composition is as follows:

330 Families

187 Female adults

90 Male adults

300 Active membership

135 Inactive membership

Economically Love Zion is a congregation of lower and middle class persons.

It consists of mostly blue collar workers and a large percentage of senior citizens on fixed incomes. There is a small contingent of middle class workers representing 9% of the congregation. In concept, we are a tithing Church, where 60% of all monies raised come through tithes; however, this represents only 50% of the active membership.

Our Church, for the last two years, has been actively engaged in a Capital Stewardship program which consists of giving sacrificially above and beyond tithes and offerings. The following represents our giving through this program over the past two years:

- * 123 families made commitments.
- * \$340,000 was committed over a three year period.
- * 62 persons had actively and consistently participated. Fifty percent of persons committed have given.

The Laborious Life of Struggle

According to Webster, a synergist is “something that enhances the effectiveness of an active agent or agents.” Synergism is the cooperative action of discrete agencies such as the total effect is greater than the sum of the effects taken independently. As a synergist relates to my project, I feel that I represent one of two agencies--a pastor who has a “gift of compassion,” a strong faith in the promise of wholeness that our Lord offers, and the gift of discernment when it comes to the needs of the down-and-out. A modern day "freedom fighter" may

be the term that best explains my relationship to my context. I feel that my sensitivity to life has been shaped in the crucible of human suffering. I have learned how to be motivated by the negative things that happened in my life. That is not to say that the positive events in my life had no meaning, which would be ludicrous. But to be motivated by the pessimistic attitudes that pervade our society is my way of making every attempt to live beyond someone's expectations of me. For example, in my life I can vividly remember black and white water fountains and bathrooms. I recall the pain of being thought of as a second class citizen. I remember joining the Air Force in an attempt to stay out of Vietnam, because I accepted that I was one of the persons in this country who had no political power or economic fortitude, therefore that meant Army and foot-soldier. I also remember the "separate but equal school system" and the national strategy that seemed to perpetually break down my self-esteem and relegate me to a life of nothingness. As you can see I have beaten the odds and believe that it was nothing but the love of Jesus that carried me through.

The primary question is, what do I hope to do in my context? How can my experiences have meaning to where I am and how I do ministry? In spite of how grim it may sound, as I ponder in retrospect, I have come to understand that I have a unique gift because of my experience base. Out of my laborious life of struggle, my gift to others has been shaped, defined, and solidified in the midst of chaos. I see a definite correlation among all facets of my ministry because I feel in many ways connected contextually to the other agent--a suffering

community.

One of the ways in which I feel connected contextually is the urban church, specifically, Love Zion Baptist Church, where there is a potpourri of types that are in constant need of ministering. We have a few economically and politically prominent members, but mostly poor people, elderly, who are in the midst of life's struggles.

There are several places in the community where I am confirming my position on suffering and the need to be more compassionate. For example, Children's Hospital; a focal point of my context where you can find many patients as well as family members in need, emotionally and economically. My experience as a chaplain did assist in designing a model of ministry that is appropriately sensitive to the pastoral needs of the sick.

Another important focal point in my project that connects me contextually is Faith Mission, a center for the homeless and helpless, where evil has implied, to those destined to reside there, that, "I'm in charge." Family separation, low self-esteem and self-respect, hopelessness, disenfranchisement, drugs, alcohol addiction, and despair are but a few examples of how evil has run its full course. Another example is Franklin County Juvenile Detention Center, a place where the youth are introduced to the life of incarceration. There are many other areas that have impacted my ministry project, however, I will focus on two areas: Franklin County Juvenile Detention Center and Faith Mission. I feel that the Lord is in solidarity with those who suffer, and I feel the call to respond to their

ever pressing needs. As I ponder the whole situation, it becomes clear that I'm in a constant state of "parallel processing" (finding meaning for my life from the experiences of others.) My ministry is continually being shaped by the day by day events that take place in my life.

Chapter II

Mission and Outreach: Words of Relief

As we are rapidly moving toward 2000 A.D., many throughout the world have naturally been faced with the question of how we are going to greet the new millennium. Certainly the celebration of the event will not be just like the usual New Year celebration. There will no doubt, be special celebrations. But the question should also be raised as to how far the celebrations will go to give meaningful expression as we enter a new millennium with hope. Those who reflect on the world situation cannot help asking what justification there is for welcoming the new millennium with hope. There are no clear signs of our moving toward the removal of the poverty and misery of vast sections of people, or of an end to the racial oppression, or of an end to the wars and violent killings going on in different parts of the world or the removal of the threat of a nuclear holocaust. But we believe that it is in a situation in which people are without hope that Christ has come with the good news of the love of God and has given us the mission of hope. One of the important dimensions of the mission of the Church is to be a sign of hope for the world. It is therefore, appropriate for the church to plan an ecumenical event to witness Christ leading his people toward

unity and peace. A representative gathering of all Christians to affirm together that God will fulfil the work he has begun by the sending of Christ and their commitment to be obedient to their calling will be a good lead for the world community to welcome the new millennium with hope.¹

There are two words that get to the core of my project. They are "mission" and "suffering." By carefully examining both words, much insight can be gained as to the direction and intentionality of this project. The first word is "mission." In the title: "Engaging the African American Congregation in a Shared Process of Outreach Ministry," there is a presupposition that there is a need for outreach ministry. The bottom line is that outreach ministry equates to the mission of the church. What is "mission" and what is the relationship between "mission" and "suffering"? "Mission" is not a biblical word according to the traditional translations. One would search in vain in an exhaustive concordance of the King James Bible for the word "mission" in several places. Like strategy, it refers to war: Saul, for example, was sent on a mission to destroy the Amalekites (I Sam. 15: 18-20).

In several New Testament verses the word "mission" comes nearer to the meaning that we generally attach to it (see Acts 12:25; Gal. 2:8). Nowhere does it refer exactly to the Christian mission in the full sense of our normal usage.

¹T. Francis, I. Selvanayagam, *Many Voices in Christian Mission*, (Madras: C.L.S., 1994) , 31, 32.

The verse in which the usage most closely approximates ours, perhaps, is 2 Corinthians 11:12. Speaking of his relationship with other Christian leaders and replying to criticisms, Paul said, "I will keep on doing what I am doing in order to cut the ground from under those who want an opportunity to be considered equal with us in the things they boast about." The Revised Standard Version reads, "their boasted mission."

Crawley points out that "strategy and mission, therefore, are not topics with which the Bible deals specifically."² However, in a larger and more general sense, both the concept of "mission" and the concept of strategy run throughout the Bible and interact with each other.

As we ask ourselves, what does mission mean, it becomes clear that there are many dimensions and definitions that will expand our understanding. At this juncture, it would be appropriate to have some expansion on the various definitions of "mission" by several authorities. Muller defined "mission" as propagation of faith:

... that its purpose is to proclaim the Gospel to all creatures, to gather the ignorant and godless from every corner of the earth, and to lead those in deplorable error to the flock of Christ and to the recognition of the Shepherd and Lord of the flock.³

He expanded that view by adding that mission is the conversion of heathens. Of course, we have expanded our concept of the word "heathen."

²Winston Crawley, *Biblical Light for the Global Task*, (Nashville: Convention Press, 1989) , 9, 10.

³Karl Muller, *Mission Theology*, (Netherlands: Steyl Press, 1985), 31, 32.

The proclamation of Jesus is genuine Good News for them, it leads to 'metanoia,' gives a new meaning to life; they experience divine salvation in Jesus and become children of God through the spirit of the Father and the Son. The theological meaning of the word 'heathen' is simply not to know Jesus Christ. To convert does not mean to proselytize. Becoming a Christian does not mean abandoning one's group or family but rather recognizing Christ as center and goal and joining the community of those who believe in him. The Church is the 'new people' of God.⁴

"Mission" is allowing us, the creatures, to have an integral part in God's eternal plan for the world. "Mission" is basically grounded in the mystery of the Blessed Trinity, in its processions and missions, in God whose whole being is self-communication and self-giving. Consequently, "mission" is by no means a craving for the spread of the Church nor the fulfilment of an arbitrary "missionary mandate" without theological foundation. "Mission" is rather an integral part of the eternal plan of God for the world.⁵

"Mission" is concerned with salvation. God wishes to free humankind from guilt and make them share in God's life. This means that individuals are to turn away from sin and turn to God, but also that these individuals enter into the family of God, the people of God. Since God's creative and saving will cannot be separated, salvation is an integral salvation: it is both "shalom" and an invitation to participate in God's Life.⁶ According to Willis there is an approach central to the love of God that allows one to look into the very nature of

⁴Ibid. , 33.

⁵Ibid. , 46.

⁶Ibid., 46, 47.

“mission.”

Missions originated in the heart of God. It is not something we decide to do for God, but God reveals his purpose to us so that we may have a creative part in his mission. Make no mistake, we do not initiate the mission nor will we consummate it. But somehow, some way, and to some extent, God has limited what He will do. That limit is the possibility of what he can do through us (Psalm 78:41).⁷

“Mission” is concerned with community. God created humankind for community and wills that the scattered children of God become the people of God. Regardless of how Church is defined Christianity is not purely a matter of individuals who go their own way independently of one another and, without the protection and support of the community. “Mission” is always concerned with the “world.” There is no abstract “mission” that is simply superimposed on the world. “Mission” does not take place in a vacuum. “Mission” is an encounter between God and the world, between the divine and the human. “Mission” is a process of integration and realizes itself incarnationally.

“Mission” is mainly concerned with those who do not yet know the Gospel, with those who are still outside the visible people of God. Thus the expression “reaching out” is appropriate but not in a geographical sense. Those who perform a herald’s service, those who proclaim the news that God was manifested in the flesh as man, and those who cooperate in the work of gathering the scattered children of God, are missionaries. “Mission” does not mean crossing seas but doing missionary work. “Mission” is a theological, not a

⁷Avery Willis, Jr., *Biblical Basis of Missions*, (Nashville: Convention Press, 1979), 23.

geographical concept.

In my approach to "mission" my position is that some congregations have activity but not outreach. Only a tiny portion of African American congregational resources are invested in "mission." Other causes might be good, but they are not "mission."

A fund raiser for the church's youth to spend a weekend in the mountains, for purchasing new carpets for the Sunday school or for paying the heating bill is not "mission." Even supporting the pastor is not "mission," unless the pastor is involved in outreach beyond the congregation or is equipping the congregation for "mission."

Resources of time, personnel, talent or finances invested in such ministries are for the well-being of the local congregation. Those resources nurture us and our Christian friends. That is a valid investment--but it is not "mission." ⁸

As Shenk states:

Mission is the commitment to reach people outside the cozy circle of congregational life. It is engagement with the poor and the disadvantaged. It is a commitment to widows and orphans, the homeless, the imprisoned, drug addicts, AIDS victims, teenage gangs, unwed mothers, the lonely and depressed, the hungry and ill, the self-sufficient and wealthy, who are not within the circle of congregational life. Mission is especially concerned with reaching people who have not confessed Jesus Christ as their Lord.⁹

⁸Karl Muller, *Mission Theology*, (Netherlands: Steyl Press, 1987), 46,47,48.

⁹David Shenk, "Grace And Generosity," *The Great Commission Handbook*, Twelfth Annual Edition (1996).

God's call to mission is not a burden; it gives great joy. The closing sentences of the Bible say "The Spirit and the bride (church) say, 'Come!' And let him who hears say, 'Come!' Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life" (Revelations 22:17).

By its very nature, the Church is missionary. Knowing this, every Christian should seek to make his/her church a missionary church by his/her personal involvement and participation. The church that is not missionary falls short of its New Testament expectation.

Missiology is defined as the academic discipline or science which researches, records, and applies data relating to the biblical origin, the history (including the use of documentary materials), the anthropological principles and techniques and the theological base of the Christian mission.

Missiology, itself a communication system like the telephone, activates a whole network of forces--some reaching out beyond itself, others linking up relationship within, systems within systems, variable structures, linkages, synapses, material and immaterial aspects which may be sensed or felt, but not necessarily observed, measured or documented. They interact on each other binding the whole together in a synthesis. It is easy enough to define missiology in terms of its purposes, but there is no living person who can adequately define it as a complex of interacting impulses. It is easy enough to describe missiology in terms of the theological, anthropological, historical and practical dimensions as a synthesis or a cohesive entity. There yet remains a great deal of research

to be done on the networks which give missiology its cohesion as a discipline.

In light of all this, how should missiology be defined? The simplest definition of missiology is “the study of individuals being brought to God in history,” but perhaps for the clear understanding of what lies before us in these pages one should attempt a more formal definition showing the component parts of the discipline. Such a working definition is badly needed. The theory, methodology and data bank are particularly directed towards:

1. the processes by which the Christian message is communicated,
2. the encounters brought about by its proclamation to non-Christians,
3. the planting of the Church and organization of congregations, the incorporation of converts into those congregations, and the growth and relevance to their structures and fellowship, internally to maturity, externally in outreach as the Body of Christ in local situations and beyond, in a variety of culture patterns.¹⁰

Motivational Strategies of Mission

What technique or strategy will encourage people to get involved with mission? Motivation is properly anchored in unchanging causes which will not be undermined by the fickle tides of history. The love of God is an eternal cause which is the crucial element in any true missionary motivation. From God’s love

¹⁰Alan Tippet, *Introduction to Missiology*, (Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1987), XIII.

emanates God's redemptive solution for the needs of humankind. It is also that divine love in a Christian's heart which moves him/her to share Christ with others.

The Christian today, confronted by these ideas, should sort out carefully his motivation for giving to missions and for going overseas. He must ascertain conviction and reality which will stand the test of adverse, trying times, and the onslaught of human ideologies. Another unfailing motivating force is a Christian's loving obedience to the authoritative command of Christ as revealed in Scripture. These are among the strands which constitute a solid motivation which can withstand the ravage of time and adverse circumstances. These and other factors blend together in the experience of a dedicated Christian to produce in a person a sense of urgency to be involved in God's outreach to the world. Paul spoke of it saying "Woe is me if I do not preach the gospel" (I Corinthians 9:16). This becomes a personal mandate to reach out in love to those who need the life-giving message of love and reconciliation.¹¹

Since the time of Christ mission has managed to not fall by the way side because our Lord gave His followers a charge and the power to carry out that charge. There are four areas that help us to see our relationship and commitment to the call. They are as follows:

1. The great commission: A look at church history will provide some explanations. Some missionaries have gone because they were convinced of the Great Commission of Jesus, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations..." (Matthew 28: 16-20) was meant for them. As Jones saw it :

This was the explanation many would have given in the last century. Even today when a minister makes plans to preach a missionary sermon, it is this

¹¹Wade T. Coggins, *So That's What Missions Is All About*, (Chicago: Moody Press, 1975), 11,12.

text that comes first to mind. The Great Commission is, of course, a valid motive. But to rely on one text as the source of all missionary conviction is precarious indeed. What if the papyrus scroll had been lost or the last chapter of Matthew mutilated? Would this then rule out missionary obedience to the 'ends of the earth' and to the end of time? The answer of course is no! From beginning to end, the New Testament is a missionary document. In some parts it puts the accent on a mission to the Jews alone? The Great Commission is a valid motive, but certainly we would not want to rest the entire case on one text.¹²

2. Human Compassion: Others would interpret missionary obedience in terms of compassion toward those in need. No one would argue that human compassion is not a legitimate motive. Although I would disagree with the writer, I do believe that compassion is a motivational factor if the appeal requires "hands on" experience in an attempt to nurture the level of conviction.

Yet human compassion as a motivation is hardly unique to the Christian experience. For the Buddhist, compassion for human life, in fact all of life, is an indispensable axiom of religion. Compassion alone has never been considered sufficient as a Christian motive. In fact it can sidetrack the Church into a program of humanitarianism that can vitiate if not destroy the cutting edge of missionary conviction.¹³

3. A World Christian Community: Still others would say that the vision of a world-wide Christian community motivates them. I would not disagree. It is a valid motive. Certainly today there is a need for such a community of Christians throughout the world. However, in the times when the Lord walked the earth, there were some who believed and some who did not. The ones who rejected the gospel did not nullify the works of Christ. We are called and sent to be lights

¹²Tracey K. Jones, Jr., *Our Mission Today*, (New York: World Outlook Press, 1963), 62.

¹³*Ibid.*, 62.

in a dark world.

It can be the cement to help hold the world together during these turbulent times. Here we see the persistent appeal of the Roman Catholic Church which makes this claim about itself as a world Christian community. Yet this motivation by itself is never an adequate explanation as to why we are to go to non-Christians. It takes our eyes off the solitary person to whom the gospel is directed, the dying African in the hospital bed, the Japanese college student seeking meaning for this life, the isolated mother in Alaska seeking comfort as she stands at her husband's grave.¹⁴

4. Finally, there are those who would express missionary obedience in terms of continuity. This is the motivation of loyalty to the past. There is the "endless line of splendor" of men and women who down through the years have given their lives to the Church.

When the Church is described as an aircraft carrier plowing through the seas with planes flying from its decks, it is a legitimate description. The pilots learn that they are free to fly in any direction at any altitude, but they must always remember where the aircraft carrier is lest they be lost at sea when they run out of fuel. The Church's life is a valid motive to mission. The Roman Catholic Church gives a high priority to this kind of obedience. There is no doubt that church loyalty can put steel into the backbone of the missionary movement when confronting a dangerous period of history. Yet church history provides ample warning that denominational loyalty by itself is never a sufficient motive.¹⁵

The second word that helps to illuminate my project is "suffering." It is suffering in general that motivates most Christians to a ministry of relief. Relief simply means wholeness, wellness, or completeness. The term "violence" refers to an event or an action that, is always connected with suffering. But not all suffering involves the quality of violence. The pain of guilt that a person feels

¹⁴Ibid., 63.

¹⁵Ibid., 65.

may be so deep and may spread through his awareness so gradually that no force of "violence" is detectable. But the word may also be used to refer to the intensity of pain that such power causes: a violent headache, a violent dread of fire. Whenever suffering is caused by an excessive application of power and therefore gives a person the experience of being twisted or crushed by that power, we have an instance of violence.¹⁶

Our age seems to be obsessed with the suffering caused by violence. People today are moved with compassion for those who are weak, and are greatly troubled by those who are immoral. Yet the uncertainties and ambiguities of right and wrong seem pale beside the horror of the modern day concentration camps where the youth of America, in particular African Americans, are the spectacle of such monumental "suffering."

The Scriptures make it clear that Christ died that we might be made anew, his death freeing us from all that puts a distance between us and God. Different parties would have viewed his death differently--as that of a criminal who had been overtaken by justice, or as that of an innocent person against whom trumped-up charges had been brought, and so forth. Whatever one might say about it, it is made clear in the Scriptures that Christ's death was to bring about healing; to repair the broken relationship between God and us, and thereby engender a new level of inter-relationships in society. After all, in the events

¹⁶Arthur C. McGill, *Suffering*, (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press), 1982, 19, 20.

surrounding that death we see several qualities which the world seldom displays: fortitude (Mark 15:23), forbearance (Luke 23:34), care for others (John 19:26), and many more. At the same time, the death of Christ represents God's implacable hostility to sin--God in Christ would not compromise with evil. Thus Christ's death becomes a mirror in which we might see God's determination to reach us in order to restore our true nature, not only as individuals, but also as one people.

The time is at hand for the saved, the 'being saved,' and the 'shall be saved' to lift high the banner of salvation, to carry it into the trenches of human sin, despair, and hopelessness, and to reclaim the offspring of the Creator in the name of Christ. We dare not put on blinders to avoid viewing the realities of the masses. We in the church cannot afford to reject the gospel that convicts us in our comfort. The church must loosen the shackles by which it is bound--the shackles of tradition, the irons of prejudice, the bars of isolation and suburban escapism--lest church people and their ecclesiastical palaces deteriorate in their own captivity, which is due to the sin of alienation.¹⁷

My project covers all the words that the Lord emphasized in Matthew 25:31f - "hungry, sick as an aspect to 'suffering'; however, the focus for this project is the "jail" as pertaining to the youth at Franklin County Juvenile Detention Center and "hungry" as relating to Faith Mission. A clear view of their "suffering" gives direction and strategy to our "mission" effort to reclaim the youth and homeless of our community.

According to Dr. Bobby Austin of the Kellogg Foundation, there is a need for a national strategy to deal with the issues of African American males:

¹⁷Ella Pearson Mitchell, *Those Preachin' Women*, (Valley Forge: Judson Press), 1992, 39.

Minorities, generally, and African American males, specifically, have historically been victims of society's disenfranchisement, discrimination, and institutional prejudice and indifference. As a result, African American males have experienced inadequate education and skill levels, damaged self-esteem, and thwarted aspirations. African American males have also increasingly become users of the criminal justice system and victims of drug abuse. There is an increasing claim that suggests this alleged victimization is less real and more imagined or it is rationalized to avoid responsibility for negative consequences or conditions.¹⁸

Senator Regis Groff stated from his plenary address to the National Black Caucus:

I have chosen to use the term's 'gennihilation.' This term--'gennihilation'--is a combination of genocide and annihilation, two terms, which by themselves, do not convey the horror of the massive self-inflicted extinction of an entire group of people: The African American male.

I want to say at the outset that I do not believe in the conspiracy theory. I do not believe that any one person, or any one group of persons, sat down anywhere at anytime, and consciously planned and plotted to gennihilate the African American male.

We all know that this African American tragedy began in the 1980s with the arrival of tons of crack cocaine in our communities. The year 1985 was a good starting point. It was in this year that the stories we were hearing about the drive-by shootings, the execution-style slayings, and murder and death of innocent citizens who just happened to be at the wrong place at the wrong time began to proliferate.

Young black men involved in the drug trade were killing each other in record numbers everywhere--from New York to San Diego--from Seattle to Miami--North and South--East and West--the story was the same. An entire generation of young black males was being wiped out.

A look at the historical numbers prove this:
 In 1930, 22.4 percent of all Americans in jail were black;
 In 1950, 29.7 percent of all jail inmates were black;
 In 1970, 35.3 percent of jail inmates were black; and
 By 1986, 45.3 percent--or nearly half--of all persons in jail were African

¹⁸Bobby Austin, "Setting A National Agenda for African-American Males," A Report by The National Black Caucus, July 1993, 5.

Americans.¹⁹

For the past 12 years, federal criminal justice policy has encouraged, supported, and prompted the use of incarceration as the primary deterrent to crime. The "war on drugs" was based upon the belief that incarceration would be a major deterrent to drug use and the violence associated with the drug trade. But, in 1991, the National Institute on Drug Abuse reported an 18 percent increase in the number of people using cocaine at least once a month and a 29 percent increase in the number of weekly cocaine users.

According to Pastor Nathaniel Bostic, a Juvenile counselor for the state of Ohio who also serves Franklin County:

The incarceration rate for 12 through 20 year old has significantly escalated from 1980 to 1996. Only homicides, suicides, and automobile accidents have climbed at a faster pace for juveniles. Statistically, the rate for African American males has shown an increase over the last 16 years. In Franklin County Juvenile Court in fiscal 1993 a total of 1,036 youth came to the attention of the court. The most disturbing thing was the fact that of those 1,036 youth adjudicated, 553 or 53.4% were committed to the ODYS. By contrast, only 719 or 40.4% of the adjudicated youth were white, and only 72 or 18% were committed to the Department of Youth Services. As such, the question of fairness has been raised by many researchers in rates of incarceration among African Americans are noted. As juveniles, African American are exposed to a prejudiced judicial system that discriminates against them at every level.²⁰

The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention has developed a blue print for a community to design and implement its own comprehensive strategy to deal with the problem of serious, violent, and chronic juvenile

¹⁹Senator Regis Groff, "Gennihalation: Blacks Wiping out Blacks in Record Numbers," A Report by The National Black Caucus, July 1993, 7, 8.

²⁰Nathaniel Bostic, "Agape Project," D.Min. diss., United Theological Seminary, 1996.

delinquency. Increases in juvenile arrests and admissions to juvenile facilities are overwhelming communities across the nation. At the same time, communities have fewer resources due to fiscal crises to handle these increases. Elected officials have responded to public fears about juvenile crime by passing a slew of "get tough" measures nationwide. But few juvenile justice professionals believe that tougher laws by themselves will stem the tide of serious youth crime. The emerging professionals believe that tougher laws by themselves will stem the tide of serious youth crime. The emerging professional consensus is that communities need comprehensive strategies to combat youth crime.²¹

It is our challenge, as the Church to lessen "suffering" in the world. We can make a difference only when we have the consciousness of the real problem and the enhanced compassion to be actionable. We can no longer limit our praise service to the ones on the inside and never seeing the ones on the outside as useful to God's kingdom. We must strengthen the family in its primary responsibility to instill moral values and provide guidance and support to children. Where there is no functional family unit, we must establish a family surrogate and assist that entity to guide and nurture the child. We must support core social institutions, schools, religious institutions, and community organizations in their roles of developing capable, mature, and responsible youth. A goal of each of these societal institutions should be to ensure that children have the opportunity and support to mature into productive law-abiding citizens. A nurturing community environment requires that core social institutions be actively involved in the lives of youth. Community organizations include public and private youth serving agencies, neighborhood groups, and

²¹The Comprehensive Strategy for Serious, Violent, and Chronic Juvenile Offenders, (Wilson and Howell 1993).

business and commercial organizations providing employment, training, and other meaningful economic opportunities for youth.²²

Higher rates of juvenile drug problems, crime, and delinquency, as well as higher rates of adult crime and drug trafficking, occur in neighborhoods where people have little attachment to the community, where there is low surveillance of public places.²³

Extreme, economic and social deprivation (substance abuse, delinquency, violence, teenage pregnancy, and school dropout), children who live in deteriorating neighborhoods characterized by extreme poverty, poor living conditions, and high unemployment are more likely to develop problems with delinquency, teenage pregnancy, and school dropout; and are more likely to engage in violence toward others during adolescence and adulthood.²⁴

Children who live in these neighborhoods and have behavior or adjustment problems early in life are more likely to have drug abuse problems as they grow older. Children raised in a family with a history of addiction to alcohol or other drugs are at increased risk of having alcohol or other drug problems and children born or raised in a family with a history of criminal activity are at increased risk of delinquency. Similarly, children born to a teenage mother are more likely to be teenage parents, and children of dropouts are more likely to drop out of school themselves.²⁵

Family conflict such as substance abuse, delinquency, violence, teen

²²The Comprehensive Strategy for Serious, Violent, and Chronic Juvenile Offenders, (Wilson and Howell 1993).

²³(Murray, 1983; Wilson and Hernsteir, 1985).

²⁴(Bursik and Webb, 1982; Farrington, Loeber, Elliott, Hawkins, Kandel, Klein, McCord, Rowan, and Tremblay, 1990).

²⁵(Slavin, 1990).

pregnancy, and school dropout all play a vital part in the wholeness of individuals. Although children whose parents are divorced have higher rates of delinquency and substance abuse, it appears that it is not the divorce itself that contributes to delinquent behavior. Rather, conflict between family members appears to be more important in predicting delinquency than family structure. For example, domestic violence in a family increases the likelihood that young people will engage in violent behavior themselves. According to the 1993 Uniform Crime Report published by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, juvenile crime in the United States increased 22 percent between 1984 and 1993. Significant jumps in homicide (167.9 percent) seem to confirm what many already believe: America's children are out of control.²⁶

There is a place where "mission" and "suffering" come together. A clear view of "suffering" gives direction and strategy to our "mission" effort if the Black Church is willing to reclaim the youth.

²⁶Bazemore Gordon, Ph.D., Florida Atlantic University; Mark Umbreit, Ph.D., University of Minnesota, September 1994).

Chapter III

MISSION: GLOBAL MENTALITY WITH LOCAL EFFECTIVENESS

But when the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the angels with him, then shall he sit on the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all the nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats; and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, you blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was hungry, and you gave me to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave me drink; I was a stranger, and you took me in; naked, and you clothed me; I was sick, and you visited me; I was in prison, and you came to me. Then the righteous will answer him, saying, Lord, when did we see you hungry, and feed you, or thirsty, and give you drink? And when did we see you a stranger, and took you in? or naked, and clothed you? And when did we see you sick, or in prison, and came unto you? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as you did it unto one of these my brethren, even the least of them, ye did it to me." (Matthew 25:30-40).¹

A theology for God's mission is dependent on a study of the Scriptures as a whole story. What I hope to communicate here is that there is a complete concept of theology that covers the whole span of mission. In the whole span of the intriguing saga of humanity are "buzz" words such as sin, death, reconcile, and salvation that shed enlightenment on the need for mission. There would be no need for mission if there had not been a falling away from God. Mission then

¹The Holy Bible, New International Version, International Bible Society 1984.

becomes divine permission to be in community with one another under the direction of the Lord Jesus who is the head of the body of believers. To be sure, there are certain precepts, standards, and commandments that pertain to the body and are exclusive to the believers. However, mission breaks down walls of separatism and transcends the individuality of believers. Mission would make no sense without the harvest as the Lord described it "plentiful and laborers few." Writers point out that prayer is one of the main ingredients in mission and in evangelization.

The principal parable of harvest is found in Matthew 9:37-38. Its central point is the command to pray for the workers for the Lord's harvest which is plentiful. This parable serves to emphasize the role of prayer in world evangelization. The somewhat similar saying in John 4:35 further stresses the vastness and potential of the Lord's harvest field. Evangelization proceeds on a note of optimism. It is the Lord's harvest field, and the potential is great. But human resources are required. Vision is required to see the abundant possibilities and to give the response of obedience to the Lord who sends.²

The "harvest" that Jesus talked about encompasses anyone with the potential to be in community with God, that's broad. Potential to be in community simply is anyone who Christ died for. Christ presented reconciliation to the whole of humanity, but some will reject the offer. There may be many deterrents such as racism, classism, etc., that would totally oppose the impact of the word of God, yet, the "good news" goes one step beyond the struggle or circumstances. For example, my grandmother was the granddaughter of a

²Roger E. Hedlund, *The Mission of the Church in the World*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1985), 175, 176.

Cherokee Chief, and one of Africa's stolen jewels. One of the stories that comes to mind is what evil did in tearing down her concept of peace. The Indians (Cherokees) were deported from the deep south to the west. During this great atrocity thousands were killed from starvation, exposure and by the barbaric acts committed by people who called themselves "Christians." Yet, my grandmother like Dr. Martin L. King, Jr. never allowed the saga of real suffering to preclude her belief in Christ.³ She was a devout Christian. Most of what she saw perpetrated on both sides of her progenitors was carried out by so-called good Americans and sanctioned by the church.

The Eschaton: A Look Into The Future

Let me state up front so that I may not be mistaken about this text, that is, this pericopie is futuristic in nature. There are implications of the initiation of a millennium kingdom that supersedes life as we know it. In this futuristic setting there is also a notable great separation of people based on their actions in various situations. It would be an injustice to God's grace to try to find justification in the good works that are lifted out of this profound text. The actual context is the Lord of glory coming to establish His kingdom. This thousand-year reign is the inauguration of the Son of Man (verse 31) coming to judge those who have been left after the great tribulation. There are numerous schools of

³James H. Cone, *Martin & Malcolm & America*, (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1992), 159, 160.

thought expressed as to just when and for whom this event takes place. In my tradition, we believe in the rapture, therefore, these individuals, "the nations" being separated in verse thirty two are the people of every nation who were not caught up to meet the Lord in the air (1 Thessalonians 4:17-18). Moreover, I am not implying that we are invited into the blessed kingdom based on any activity that we have done or shall do. We are simply saved by grace, "not of works, lest any man should boast" (Ephesians 2:8-9).

I have chosen this eschatological setting to make a very important point and that point is: compassion is imperative in any society. What is the driving force, the motivation for one to have been subjected to severe persecution in order to stamp out basic suffering as pertaining to a few lowly people who were ultimately called, "the brethren of Christ?" There are contemporary ways to lessen suffering such as raising sensitivity and putting some concrete plan of action in place that will enhance consciousness. When I was a child, we were somewhat economically worse off than my best friend. His dad worked through him to reach me by giving my friend extra lunch money to cover my needs each day. It was not until his dad died some years later that I was able to repay the favor. His dad had taught us both a valuable lesson that we will never forget. When my friend met some hard times and insurmountable life threatening situations, I was there for him. I was able to return mercy because mercy was real to me through the teachings of my friend's dad. As we can see in this backdrop, Jesus is showing mercy to some because they have shown mercy to

others thereby, affirming that mercy and compassion are reciprocal. I have also chosen this text because as you can see in verse thirty five, the Lord of Glory, the King, has identified Himself with those who were in the most need of someone having mercy on them.

The location of Jesus' ministry on the Galilean periphery is congruent with the witness of the New Testament as a whole, which sees Jesus as a poor person who identified with the oppressed and died as one of them to liberate humanity from the power of sin and death and make possible a new order of life--of love, justice, freedom, and peace.⁴

"Inasmuch as you have done it (meat to the hungry, drink to the thirsty, hope to the stranger, etc) (Matthew 25:40) unto one of the least of these my brethren, you have done it to me." Consequently, we could ask, who are the Lord's brethren? This question is best answered in the gospel of Luke.

And there came to him his mother and brethren, and they could not come at him for the crowd. And it was told him, Thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to see Thee. But he answered and said unto them, My mother and my brethren are these that hear the word of God, and do it (Luke 8:19-21).

This expanded definition allows me to make the connection that tenaciously holds all of humanity together as one body. As we desire to have compassion on our fellow brothers or sisters, we in essence have become one community because all who hear the word of God are the family of Christ. Christ paid the same price for the unjust as for the just, for the unlikely as well as for the likely, for the underprivileged as well as for the privileged. We all have been

⁴Orlando E. Costas, *Liberating News*, (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1989), 61.

"died for," and that makes us related in a special way. Thus, I feel that the mission is to let people in various situations know that a precious price has been paid for them.

Therefore, remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenant of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ (Ephesians 2:12-13).

The People of Struggle

I have said all of this to show the relationship of a few verses that are the power of my theology and focus of my project. To think globally and act locally is to not say, "Lord, when did we see You as a stranger, and took you in? or naked and gave you clothes? when sick, or in prison, and came unto you?" The surprise and miracle of the text is the fact that where you find suffering, pain, hopelessness, and emotionally drained people, there you find Jesus. And through our missions, we help those who suffer to see that the Lord is there for them and in them no matter how bleak life looks to them. The Lord is in solidarity with those who suffer as well as those who minister to them. Although this pericope is based on some time in the future, the reality is that we, although not for the sake of winning favor with God, should feel compassion for those "with their backs against the wall,"⁵ because we have finally come to that place

⁵Howard Thurman, *Jesus and the Disinherited*, (Richman: Friends United Press Edition, 1981), 13

in life where we know just how much was paid for us. In the church where change is constantly being perfected: sinners become saints; losers in the world become winners, the worst become the best.

I can count on the fingers of one hand the number of times that I have heard a sermon on the meaning of religion, of Christianity, to the man who stands with his back against the wall. It is urgent that my meaning be crystal clear. The masses of men live with their backs constantly against the wall. They are the poor, the disinherited, the dispossessed. What does our religion say to them? The issue is not what it counsels them to do for others whose need may be greater, but what religion offers to meet their own needs. The search for an answer to this question is perhaps the most important religious quest of modern life.⁶

What does it mean to see beyond the walls of the sanctuary? Mission is the main focus of the church and should always have global implications carried out at least minimally at the local level. This being true, what prevents forward motion in missionary work? First of all, we are not yet unified as a body of believers contrary to what some may feel. Churches are not abiding by the principle given in the Scripture on the analogy of the natural body and spiritual body. In this principle motif the body works in harmony with no member taking more credit for the overall function. Each member has a specific purpose individually and corporately to carry out the bodily functions. I say we are not unified because most African American congregations are in competition with each other in gaining the most prominence in the community. The miracle is just as God provides the right gifts in the church, God also provides a certain profile for the community. If we could come together, the synergy would present a force

⁶Ibid., 15.

to be reckoned with. Our combined efforts would make a great difference in presenting Christ to the world.

Secondly, church denominations and local churches suffer from an identity crisis, especially by virtue of the fact that they resemble so closely the life patterns of the secular world (which are not all evil). Most local churches have lost, to some degree, the essential elements for ministry. More often than not mission is vague, fragmented, and unrealistic. Goals of evangelizing, soul winning, and missional priorities have become platforms for fund raising, increasing membership and profit motivated.

I really don't know if we are cognizant of how we as a struggling people have acquiesced and become ultra-conservatives participating in the exclusion of others just by our approach to worship. Love Zion has come a long way in its attempt to overcome the stigma of being exclusive in its approach to worship. Like many congregations, Love Zion was being exclusive through language, attitude, and the desire to gain approval from the educated and the more sophisticated. We could ask, what kind of vision do we have of the one true and living God? A God who ultimately says "yes" to all of humanity, not to just the privileged, but to the ones who may not be able to measure worth by material objects that some of us flaunt when we drive from our fine homes in our fancy cars, wrapped in fur and draped in gold. Well, the message is loud and clear-- this exclusive club is for the affluent, the well off, the whole. Of course, affluence, wellness and wholeness are relative. It is as if we are saying, "We

just want to use your community for a couple of hours so we can feel good and feel justified.” Perhaps I’m a little too critical in my way of expressing what I see as one of the greatest challenges of the church today. But, it cannot be denied that poor people are kept out because they are not made to feel wanted. On special days when the congregants want to feel pragmatic, the doors are opened for the general public. We have dress down days in a real attempt to say that we are not exclusive in our fellowship, yet the lasting impact is not enough to offset years of allowing classism to prevail in separating the masses.

By allowing classism to dictate how we worship has, without doubt, bound the church impotent in reaching the ones who our Lord went the extra mile to include. According to Kirby, there were numerous groups that were considered the outcast in Jesus’ day. God in Christ targeted those individuals whom society had relegated to nothingness by making the message clear and concise that they too were invited in.

Jesus held the most exalted estimate of men, all kinds of people of all conditions: lepers, renegades, tax-collectors, dissolute women, Romans, Greeks, barbarians, slaves included. He recognized them all as his Father’s children, sacred temples, with boundless capacity to live lives of love in the Father’s home. From his own rich experience he had learned that men may walk in communion with God and in fellowship with one another.⁷

The banquet supper in the book of Luke is also a clear illustration of God’s inclusiveness.

A certain man was giving a big dinner, and he invited many; and at the

⁷Kirby Page, *The Creative Revolution of Jesus: Then and Now*, (La Habra: Kirby Page, 1971), 13

dinner hour he sent his slave to say to those who had been invited, 'come; for everything is ready now.' but they all alike began to make excuses. The first one said to him, 'I have bought a piece of land and I need to go out and look at it; please consider me excused.' And another one said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to try them out; please consider me excused.' And another one said, 'I have married a wife, and for that reason I cannot come.' And the slave came back and reported this to his master. Then the head of the household became angry and said to his slave, 'Go out at once into the streets and lanes of the city and bring in here the poor and crippled and blind and lame.' (Luke 14: 16-24)

In this parable the main point is when society's best were too busy to respond to the invitation, the (Lord) sent his servants to the highways and byways to gather the street people to come and feast with Him (Luke 14:15-24). That says something profound about the availability of the street people. They are a people who are expectant of a miracle just to have their daily bread and necessities of life; a people who are free from all of the worries of making it big and maintaining that status. From this parable and Sheila Cassidy's, *Good Friday People*, it becomes very clear that there is a need for all of God's people to be of one mind.

Good Friday People is a term that I have coined to refer to the people who, for whatever reason, find themselves called to powerlessness and suffering. It is in some ways synonymous with the Hebrew word 'anawim,' the little people, the marginated, disenfranchised ones, but it is broader than that, for it encompasses men and women from all walks of life who are called by name, summoned to climb down the ladder, to share 'the same fate as the poor.'⁸

The Problem: Diminished Sensitivity

⁸Sheila Cassidy, *Good Friday People*, (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1991), 9.

It is my position that diminished sensitivity is the major reason for the exclusion of those less fortunate from our church family. This problem is systemic. I would have never thought that as an African American I somehow communicated by my actions that I am better or that I deserve more because of the measure of grace that has been bestowed on me. In *The Big Small Church* authored by David R. Ray, there is a poem by an unknown writer called "Listen Christians" that basically says it all. The poem serves notice on all of us who sometimes miss the main point in our attempt to be pious.

I was hungry and you formed a humanities club and discussed my hunger. Thank you. I was imprisoned and you crept off quietly to your chapel in the cellar and prayed for my release. I was naked and in your mind you debated the morality of my appearance. I was sick and you knelt and thanked God for your health. I was homeless and you preached to me of the spiritual shelter of the love of God. I was lonely and you left me alone to pray for me. You seem so holy; so close to God. But I'm still very hungry and lonely and cold.⁹

When I first read this poem, I had instantaneous apprehension because my initial reaction was to criticize the writer by saying that the expectations are too vague and lack responsibility that should be incumbent on the poor person who wrote the poem. I thought of something I read from Roger S. Greenway, *Discipling The City*. "Three kinds of poor: the unfortunate poor(typhoons, war, and famine), the oppressed poor (those made poor because the rich structure society so that they may remain in power and use the poor for their own wealth),

⁹David R. Ray, *The Big Small Church Book*, (Cleveland: The Pilgrim Press, 1992), 119.

and those who are poor due to their own bad choices."¹⁰ But, as I pondered what was being said in the poem, it became clear to me that I had become part of a system that failed to have sensitivity to the pains and struggles of others.

I thought because I considered myself far from being economically well off, I would automatically be classified as poor. Well, I had an eye opening experience one day in 1993. I met with a colleague who is a law professor at Capital University, who wanted me to meet his pastor to talk about a potential venture of starting up a mission in an urban area of town. We met and had a great lunch talking about the many possibilities. During the meeting, I saw my gifts and talents as barriers to a real connection with poor people. I had much more than money. I had employability, education, and marketable skills. In essence I had hope. The moral of this personal testimony is that I would need to constantly recall my personal history of struggle as well as my struggles as an African American in order to be sensitive and connected to the dilemma and plight of the economically and politically down and out. Sometimes there is a greater need than money to have hope. According to Sheila Cassidy we need to redefine what it means to be poor.

Poverty, the way I understand it, consists not simply in the deprivation of material things, food, shelter, education and so on, but in the absence, or loss of what most people need to live their lives fully. Understood in this light, poverty encompasses a multitude of losses: bereavement, physical and mental handicap, illness, depression and plain ordinary loneliness and misery. A multitude of people, therefore, are called to suffer, though for many this

¹⁰Roger S. Greenway, *Discipling The City*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1992), 160.

suffering will be endured in the secrecy of their own hearts, as they yearn for love or for freedom or simply for a greater fullness of living. I believe that Good Friday People, like the Anawim, are very specially, loved by God, for he has called them to walk towards him along a particularly narrow path, the road to Calvary, the same road as his Son. I believe most deeply that they do not walk this path by chance and that they do not walk it in vain. I have no clever answer to the eternal 'Why of' suffering but I am convinced that whatever its cause and whatever its outcome, it is never without meaning. Just what that meaning is I can only guess: perhaps different people's suffering has different meanings. Some are clearly purified and strengthened by it and go on to do great things for God and his people. Others are quite simply broken, dehumanized and destroyed. Some are ruined before they can even begin: the parcel unwrapped with such eagerness and hope reveals only a pitiful collection of broken shards, wrecked beyond any hope of repair. Such are the children damaged in utero or at birth, or so wounded in childhood that they remain warped and stunted forever.¹¹

Much of our society is fragmented, disconnected, in the process of disintegration, an arena in which human relations are often cold and competitive, and often even violent. Neighborhood ties have been broken by individual mobility and urban sprawl. Relations in the workplace have been depersonalized by bureaucracy. The family is in trouble, with parents forced to spend more time earning a living than the raising of children. Divorce, suicide, alcoholism, drug abuse, Black on Black crime - all measures of personal and social disorder are on the rise. More and more frequently we speak of our economy as being out of control. There is a desperate need to take the Church out of the comfort zone and into the places where people are starving, hurting and in emotional bankruptcy.

"White racism adds a new demand of reconciliation and repentance for

¹¹Sheila Cassidy, *Good Friday People*, (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1991), 2.

emptied urban church buildings and lost evangelistic opportunities."¹² When I ride through some of the communities of Columbus; when I see the desperation, and helplessness on the faces of people at the homeless shelters; when I sense the despair at the Franklin County Juvenile Detention Center, I get frightened as to where we are going. The arrest rate of youths for violent crimes; the combined arrest rate of juveniles for violent crimes of murder, rape, robbery and aggravated assault at 511.9 per 100,000 in 1995, I find myself pondering the words of our Lord, "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them . . ." (Matthew 28:19). The profound message subsequently is to start in Jerusalem, Samaria, and Judea--locally and then move out to the areas of need - "the remotest part of the earth" (Acts 1:8). What this means to me is that mission must be the main focus of the church and it should have global implications that are carried out in a local strategy.

The Call: Back To The Basics

In spite of all that we face as a people and as Christians, we know beyond doubt that God is calling, alarming, directing, compelling, and sensitizing us to be missionaries who bear the same objective of the Lord.¹³ We can no longer be

¹²Harvie M. Conn, *A Clarified Vision for Urban Mission*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1987), 51.

¹³M. Thomas Starkes, *The Foundation of Missions*, (Nashville: The Broadman Press, 1981), 36-42.

exclusive. We must break down the walls of separation that prevent us from being all that the Lord desires us to be. We can no longer be fulfilled when we know that the good news is circumventing some of God's most precious people. We must emphasize in our congregations that God identifies with the hungry, lonely, homeless, and those who are considered, as Christ said it best, "the least of these my brethren."

Where does this put us as Christians in today's arena? How effective would the church be if we adopted the philosophy: church and mission are inseparable; church and mission are the instrument that God uses to gather God's people. How can we get back to the basics in God's mission?

The Focus

We get back to the mission and to this basic concept by first focusing on the early church. There were several aspects of the first church that we can use as a paradigm to stay focused on the ultimate purpose. One aspect is to have an expanded view of the mission field. One of the important things that we learned from the first church was that heavenly power comes when we have unity and oneness in our direction. Allow me to use one of my experiences from the Air Force as a way to make my point. One Sunday, my family and I were out in search of a new church home. We had recently moved due to my new assignment in North East Detroit. When we arrived at the church we had decided to visit, we were confronted with the epitome of disharmony. Upon our

arrival at Sunday School ending and the beginning of morning worship, we encountered a loud commotion. I was taken to the pastor's study where I was thrust into the middle of a heated argument over an Old Testament issue concerning King David. People out in the sanctuary were dismayed over the outbreak of emotion that was exhibited by the so-called "officials of the church." After the services, we prayed for them, left without hesitation and never returned to this church during my entire Air Force assignment. The lack of unity, dissension, and tension was opposite the peaceful spirit of worship that we were so accustomed to in previous worship experiences. We concluded that the evidence of what we experienced that morning would render this congregation helpless in reaching those in distress.

Naming The Problem And Taking Ownership

The early church saw its ethnic, racial, and gender problems and took ownership. A committee was formulated as a task force to try and alleviate the problem. Problem situations were not just prayed over and assumed that it would go away. The sense of urgency led the leadership to take responsibility so as not to allow dissension and blatant animosity to linger and separate the two major groups. To be sure, one side felt slighted because of racial heritage while the other with legitimate representation failed to see the concern: "Now at this time, while the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint arose on the part of the Hellenistic Jews against the native Hebrews, because their

widows were being overlooked in the daily serving of food" (Acts 6:1). If we apply the same paradigm to the church today, we would own our differences and become a unified body striving to do the will of God by seeing all of God's creation as an opportunity to make disciples.

A Need For Enhanced Compassion

Not only do we need to focus on the early church, but secondly, we need to have enhanced compassion. This sounds so simple, but let me say that it has been a challenge here at Love Zion to get people motivated to do basic mission work. I know that it is not because they don't feel a desire, but there not may be a fullness in the area of compassion. What is compassion? Why do we need "hands on" experience to have real compassion that energizes us to do missionary work? The word in Greek: *splanchnizomia*, to have the bowels yearn, i.e. (figuratively) feel sympathy, to pity: have (be moved with) compassion. When describing Jesus' reaction to various needs in the New Testament, the verb *splanchnizomia* literally means "to be moved in one's bowels." The Greek poets from Aeschylus down regarded the bowels as the seat of violent passions such as anger and love, but the Hebrews regarded them as the center of the tenderer affections, especially of kindness, benevolence, and pity.¹⁴ The bowels were for them equivalent to our hearts as the seat of compassion. Compassion portrays an image of one having his/her inner parts

¹⁴IBD., Vol 3, 353.

(guts) twisted to the point that the person is compelled to take action. For example, when we watch television, whether we see a gross situation or a near starved child in some foreign country, we are not moved to do anything, save change the channel to a less offensive situation. In other words when there is no real connection with a situation, we are not compelled to action. Take the story of the leper who came running to Jesus, fell on his knees and said, "Master, you can make me whole, if you will." As the story goes, Jesus looked at him, being filled with compassion and said, "I will, be whole." Jesus no doubt knew the agony of this dreadful disease. Yet, it was not until this leper had the divine audacity to take charge of his life and find relief. He took his problem to someone who had compassion as well as the power to make him whole again (Luke 5:12-16).

People have to feel the need to have compassion. They need direct influence, "hands on," "person to person" contact to be energized and motivated to perfect change. In essence, they have to put a face on the problem. As an African American congregation we are faced with attempting to reach the down and out from many different areas of concern. An example that comes to mind is from our visitations to the Franklin County Juvenile Detention Center. One night in the early stages of this project, we were approached by a young man about seventeen years old who expressed jubilation because the facility was being visited by an African American congregation. He said, "Black people, praise God for Black people! You know I was set up to sell drugs in my community by a

White man, arrested by a White policeman, assigned a White defense counselor before a White judge. The last thing I need is a White man to tell me about Jesus. So far I have been batting zero." This message has been one that has helped "twist the gut" (compassion) and raise the level of sensitivity for various members in our congregation. Well, it says two things. First, he was glad to see us (the Black Church) because we have no real presence in the penal system as proclaimers of the faith. What the young man saw was a disproportionate number of African Americans on the inside. The residents simply saw more White churches coming with "good news" as if the Black Church was oblivious to the real problem. The second thing that we can glean from this show of enthusiasm is the young man's lack of responsibility in taking control of his life. He was saying that his whole dilemma was racially motivated. He wanted us to believe that his demise was central to the first person in his chain of negative events. However, the reality was that he was doing time for drug trafficking and needed some relief. It was more conducive for him to have "Black people" to share in his struggles.

CHAPTER IV

EXPANDED CONSCIOUSNESS: THE DESIGN

Since my main focus in this project is to raise the level of sensitivity in the area of human suffering, I must start with the presupposition that there is a deficiency. My position is that there is a need to revitalize our strategy as an African American church community because much of the church's worship service is exclusive of those who are really down and out. Often building campaigns and renovation projects must take preference over needy people who often have no one else to turn to.

In designing this "model-in-ministry," I had to start with three basic questions: How do I engage the church community at Love Zion Baptist Church in a shared process of outreach ministry? How do we get people empowered to move on the notion that there must be some actionable, concrete initiatives that would enhance programs already in place? Finally, how will this strategy, if carried out to the fullest extent make things better in the community? As I attempt to answer these questions, it is my intent to shed some light on my design strategy.

My strategy for engaging the church was to revisit the areas of human

suffering by getting people out of the church building and in the community. This may seem too basic, but one of the major problems with most urban churches where the majority of its congregants live in the suburbs is that its senses become dull. People come to church to cope with issues that are operative in their own worlds, oblivious to some of the local devastation of an economic holocaust that is commonplace in some neighborhoods. I developed a plan of action that compelled congregants to go and see some of what surrounds the church where we "praised the Lord."

The goal was very clear in my mind - raise the consciousness and the church would see the vision of what could be done. This left me with another question, how do you get people motivated and empowered to do something? The first step was to develop a pre-test in an attempt to determine where the congregants were in the area of outreach ministry. I needed something to assess the congregation's desires and expectations. The pre-test gave me a range as to how effective my design would be. This pre-test covered a magnitude of areas within mission. I was able to gauge various positions on mission, local and foreign. One's position on witnessing, salvation, and exclusivity are also some of the areas that are common threads in outreach ministry that make or break a quality program (Appendix A).

The pre-test validated for me that much work was needed to get people back in contact with what it means to be sent out as a "light to the world." It was obvious that our annual assessment to the Lott Carey Foreign Mission

Convention was satisfaction for many people who did not want any personal connection with poverty. While this action is commendable, it tends to dull sensitivity because there is no real contact with what goes on outside of the church's walls. Also, foreign giving and the recognition from the convention often justified a reduced sensitivity to some of the local needs.

Now that I had the results of the pre-test, I needed to allow the Spirit to move the congregation through preaching sermons that were focused on elevating consciousness in the area of outreach ministry. I preached a series of sermons that challenged individuals to live out the true meaning of the call. (Appendix C-F). The first sermon was designed and developed to demonstrate that the Lord is the power source in outreach ministry. The power that we the body have been given is the energy that motivates the church to go to the "ends of the earth" by way of the local community "Jerusalem and Judea." Also, what the Lord put in place for the church cannot be repudiated until all "of the earth" has been reached. This text is the bases for local as well as foreign mission. The second sermon was shared to bring into unity all the people for whom Christ died. Also, to remind the church that Christ is with her until "the end of the age." In the mandate to "teach all nations," it is incumbent on the missionary to be inclusive. There must be no person from any nation with a low priority status because of economical, social, racial status, or any other reason.

My third sermon was used to drive home the point that God inaugurated the "ministry of reconciliation." As the voice of God, we are sent into the world

to heal because we have been healed; to love all because we have been loved; to show mercy because mercy has been shown for us. I wanted congregants to know that we all are called to be witnesses and missionaries.

The fourth sermon in the series was designed to raise the level of consciousness in the congregation. I used Paul's burden in this text as an illustration as to how we the church should ache for the outsider. Our compassion should be elevated for all people, especially those who have been relegated to a position of nothingness by a society that evaluates God's love by "stuff" that we have and things that we accomplish.

After the series of sermons, I needed willing workers to carry out this project. After meeting with contextual associates we came up with a sign-up sheet that went in the church bulletin for several weeks (Appendix G). After getting people motivated, I used a technique to test a selected group of congregants for spiritual gifts. My position is that every Christian has God given spiritual gifts. *A Guide to Spiritual Gifts and Lay Involvement*, written by Larry Gilbert is a study that teaches church members what a spiritual gift is. This resource helped each individual to discover his/her personal gift. The importance of knowing what their spiritual gift is enabled each participant to know in what area they were best suited to minister. As we develop and use our gift or gifts, empowered by the Holy Spirit, we will certainly grow as individuals and as the church. Upon completion of this study congregants had a better understanding of the difference between a spiritual gift and a natural talent.

After testing, a class was taught to enhance the call as members in the body of Christ (Appendix H). The point was emphasized that we are many members in the body, but that by God's grace we are called corporately for (1) the works of ministry and, (2) the edification of the saints (Ephesians 4: 11-16).

Another major task in the model was to assign leaders. The vision of the model was that it would be taken from the words of our Lord in Matthew 25:31f. The piercing words "hunger," "sickness," "jail," and "stranger," seem to fit the areas that needed to be addressed in the community. This vision allowed me to develop the paradigm (Appendix I) where several outreach ministries would function as independent ministries, yet would be under one head. Drawing from the spiritual gifts and assessment package, I met with individuals who had gifts in focused areas. A leader and teams were selected from the groups based on spiritual aptitude. It was understood that the entire area would be too large to effectively evaluate the effectiveness of this project. It was at this point that I realized that the project would be too large if all the areas in the paradigm were to be used in validating my position. I met with my consultants and it was agreed that I should contact United Theological Seminary and my mentor for instruction. After communicating my dilemma, it was agreed that by focusing on two areas within my paradigm, I could in fact validate and stay consistent with my polemic track. The two areas chosen were "hunger" and "prison" from the Matthean text. I chose these two because there is an aspect of loneliness and sickness associated with "hunger" and confinement. As I mentioned, human

suffering is a dimension of physical, psychological, and spiritual loss.

With team leaders and ministerial teams in place, the next major step was to have an education and training program that would enhance the effectiveness during the field visits. Several seminars and training sessions were presented in preparation for visits to focus areas (Appendix J-S).

One of my consultants had served as a foreign missionary and had much experience on how the church operated abroad. My experience was somewhat limited because my travels abroad were primarily associated with military assignments. My view of mission needs was always skewed due to the fact that the United States had a westernized impact on lifestyles near bases. In essence this meant that some of the cultural differences were washed-down around U. S. Military installations, therefore, my conclusions about mission work were not validated. My consultant had the insight to know that my opinion about foreign mission work was a bit off center. That is, I had a bias toward foreign mission because it appeared that local suffering went unattended. He made a recommendation to my other consultants that I be sent on a foreign mission in order to see some necessary strategy for my project and to raise my awareness to how a foreign mission functions. The recommendation was agreed upon and my church gave me the okay and funded me to go to a foreign mission. I chose Jamaica, West Indies because of language restrictions and time restraints.

I had a friend in Columbus, Ohio who had been on several mission trips to Jamaica, so I made contact. After a few contact calls I was scheduled to visit the

Servant's Heart Ministries of Mandesville Manchester, Jamaica, West Indies. I thought about my focus, my goals for this trip and what I wanted to achieve that would inform my "model-in-ministry" project. My main goal was to compare the approach and technique of a local and foreign mission.

Going To Jamaica

In preparation for the trip, I drew from several resources that were helpful in getting focused to make this trip. There were six steps that gave me insight:

1. Unite in Prayer--We all know prayer is important, but most short-term mission teams spend more time on other preparations.

It was important to seek God's guidance and power and seek His presence and provision. "We have seen united prayer weld teams together in a clear purpose, creating a life-changing dependence on God's faithfulness."

2. Go As Learning Servants--Often it is not what we say but how we say it that makes a difference in ministry. I did learn from my experience in the Air Force that many Americans go overseas with attitudes tainted by superiority and condescension. Others went with humble, servant-like hearts. They were received with grand warmth and love.

3. Be Culturally Appropriate--A key concern of every church is how to relate to its society. These issues are usually complex and are often deeply bound by tradition. "As cross-cultural visitors, you may be surprised to realize that much of your faith system is also bound to your culture." In preparation for

my trip I studied the culture, both the culture of the society and that of the Servant's Heart Ministries. It was important for me to understand the people's history, traditions, etc. -- I was willing to adjust my cultural ways to theirs.

4. "Live an Incarnational Lifestyle--Jesus came as God and lived as man-incarnationally. What are we telling nationals if we come to serve them, yet live apart from them?"

5. Model Reproducible Ministry--Everything accomplished by Christ could be and was accomplished by His disciples--including sacrificial death. I considered this as I planned my mission trip. I wanted people to be able to follow my example after I departed. "City-wide evangelism with big speaker systems is not usually reproducible, however evangelism done jointly in small groups may be.

6. I had to be wise with my limited resources--I needed to set the example because I believed that there are no people on the face of the earth who are too poor to be able to finance their own spiritual work.¹

I had an expectation of seeing a paradise, but what I discovered was that Mandesville was about 3 hours from Montego Bay, completely away from the tourist areas. I had a chance to see what perhaps other visitors had failed to see. I saw where the common people lived. I saw a people who told me of their plight. For example, local nationals were not allowed to swim on beaches that

¹Rich Correll and Arlene Vanderloon, "Preparing for Your Short-Term Mission Trip." *The Great Commission*, Twelfth Annual Edition, 1995.

were designated for tourists. I also saw a people with a profound zeal for Christ over and against what I would call obvious oppression.

Western money has the potential to create havoc on the mission field-and it often does. Because of the vast difference in living standards and economies, a small amount of money has a dramatic impact upon ministry.

After my arrival I began a fast paced week where the Lord allowed me to hear His clarion call for my life. The activities for the first day were minimal. On the second day I was taken to see the various entities of ministry that were operative under the direction of Servant's Heart Ministries. The vision of this mission is to be self-sufficient through empowering the people. They have a massive oven where baking bread not only feeds the hungry, but also brings in some revenue to help in the cost of operating the facility. Auto mechanics are also being taught to raise the esteem of individuals by giving them the hope of finding employment. In addition, there is a sewing center and a cabinet building facility. Both are used to 1. Train up individuals to stand on their own; and 2. To raise funds to help off-set the operational cost.

During the rest of the week, I was out in the mission field with the mission team. I saw the team work a street ministry in which I took part. I taught Bible studies, spoke at Bethel Bible College, and Teacher's Bible College, ministered at an unwed mother's home and met with the medical staff at a local hospital.

Up until Friday, I saw the mission strategy as about the same intensity needed for Love Zion. However, on Friday, I was taken to a place called the

infirmary. This place reeked of death and disease. It was a place where people were sent to die because there was no place for them to go. There were approximately ninety residents and one staff nurse and one other person. I saw people on the balance between life and death. Their water supply was contaminated, the freezer was inoperative, therefore, the meat was tainted and the smell was horrendous. The sanitation was atrocious, I literally needed a mask to stay functional. The one image that I will never forget is the visit to the men's quarters. There was a man on the back porch with no arms or legs and no clothes, scooting to his plate. I must say if he had been successful he may have died from food poisoning because the food had turned green.

I knew that Dr. Huffman, my consultant, had been successful in raising my consciousness to the need for foreign mission as well as local. I went back to Love Zion with a report that compelled us to be more actionable to work foreign mission. We committed to send help to Servant's Heart Ministries with emphasis put on doing something for the Infirmary.

All systems were go, I just needed to know specifically what needs were most prevalent in the community. First, I needed to assess the local congregation in terms of the scope of my project. During my research, I defined and assigned a working meaning for "suffering," not just from an economical and a sociological standpoint, but from a spiritual view as well. I wanted to draw from the congregants an in-depth view of how "suffering" is real in daily life. Also, I desired to know if there were members in the midst of our worship experience at

Love Zion, who were deprived of the basic necessities of life. Were there members who were spiritually bankrupt in the midst of a progressive praise service? Second, I needed to know where the local community was, in terms of suffering and the community's point of view on the church as a place of compassion and refuge.

My initial goals were met by use of survey questionnaires and personal interviews which I designed for the congregation and the local community to assess the degree of suffering (appendix Q-R). The church survey was administered to the local congregation with a two-fold strategy in mind. First, it was administered to communicate areas of interests that are major concerns in most people's lives. Second, I wanted congregants to share their own needs: emotionally, spiritually, and economically as a catalyst to understand the need for sensitivity to those of less fortune outside of the congregation. I did not want to consider the larger community needs without first assessing the real needs at Love Zion. I met great difficulty with the community survey which validates a presupposition: people are resistant to visitors asking in-depth and personal questions. This may be due to the many scams that are prevalent in some inter-city neighborhoods. I had to make a quick adjustment in my technique and strategy by interviewing twenty African American pastors within my context across denominational lines instead of using the community survey. This allowed me to not only get their perspective, but also allowed me to assess their individual missions strategy.

CHAPTER V

FIELD EXPERIENCE: CONTACT WITH REAL SUFFERING

All systems were in order for this project to get off the ground. All leaders and teams were assigned. They had been tested, trained, and educated in the areas that would impact the target areas of “suffering.” I made contact with the officials at Franklin County Juvenile Detention Center and Faith Mission. I met with the directors explaining the gist of my project. I let it be known that my expectations were: 1) raise the consciousness of the congregation; and 2) initiate outreach ministries at both facilities that would bring some relief to the “suffering” of residents.

Two teams of approximately ten people per team made ten visits to Franklin County Juvenile Detention Center and five to Faith Mission. Although, the focus and expectations were the same, I will deal with the two areas separately.

First, Franklin County Juvenile Detention Center required that all participants have background checks done prior to their first visit. This was done in a timely manner allowing the research to get started. A short religious service was used to draw the residents into the spirit of the project as well as to establish rapport. For the first five visits I prepared a homily for the evening. The last five I assigned

Deacon Tim Myles and Minister Lewis Bershell the privilege of presenting the "good news." The order of service included a prayer, Scripture and two hymns. After the devotion I would ask a relevant question that usually would generate some reaction and enthusiasm because the question contextualized the passage.¹ Groups were broken into smaller groups for discussion. Each group would have one of our team members from Love Zion as the facilitator. After extensive discussion each group would select a spokesperson to present to the plenary group. At the end of the discussion, I would present the meat of the text. I was deliberate and intentional in getting to the core of the problem in the scripture and relating how problems emerge today and are lived out. Often times individuals would express great remorse and regret for their personal situations.

During most of the visits we ministered to as many as three different groups. At the end of each visit, we received feedback from detention center officials. From start to finish of the study the feedback was always positive. We heard from them that our approach was most effective. Also, that we were able to bring peace because our approach challenged different gang members to be in community with each other. Finally, officials said from time to time that they even felt that they had been in an effective worship service. One guard said that his group often carried the discussion on later that evening and the next day.

During one session, one young man of about sixteen asked, "Why do you tell

¹ Samuel D. Proctor, *Preaching About Crises in The Community*, Philadelphia, The Westminster Press, 1988, 121.

us about hope, we have no hope? My daddy is in the “big house,” my mother is on drugs and my brother is here with me, so are my cousins. Why do you tell us about hope? We are destined to be thugs.”

This is a sad commentary for a young man to have no vision of the future. He had been in and out of the center and was truly destined for the “big house.” But it was this kind of reaction from the residents that empowered and escalated the consciousness of the participants. One of the most important aspects of the service was the time that we reflected after the residents were taken back to their restricted areas. It was during this time that I feel that the Holy Spirit worked on perfecting change in us. We formed a circle. I allowed each person to express what they were feeling after experiencing the helplessness and hopelessness that they had just witnessed during the sessions. The profound challenge that surfaced during each visit was that this work was imperative. Each participant was left with a sense of urgency and vowed to communicate the plight of the “suffering” youth to others. I knew that if this group could be moved by what was happening, it was possible to reach the entire church. Being confronted with this challenge, I devised a strategy to bring together my hospital chaplaincy work and this project. Working out the details for this change was very simple because it only entailed the center notifying the church secretary at Love Zion Baptist Church when any resident was hospitalized. The age limitations at the center and at Children’s Hospital were consistent, allowing for simplicity in developing a viable tracking system.

In my attempt to reach the other members of the church, I wrote several case

studies that were discussed with various ministries in the church in an attempt to raise the consciousness of the congregation. The excerpts allowed me to drive home my point that "suffering" is real. The names have been changed to protect the privacy of the patients.

Case Study # 1

Summary:

Charles [REDACTED] is a Black male age sixteen who is in the hospital awaiting the results of several test to determine what the problem is because he has been spitting up blood. The problem is intensified because he is also in the Franklin County Juvenile Detention Center (FCJDC) awaiting disposition. His hearing has taken place while he awaits to see if he is also going to have to fight for his physical life.

After getting through the preliminary introduction, I had a discussion with Mr. [REDACTED] and Mr. [REDACTED]. Mr. [REDACTED] had been freed from his chains and was allowed to clean his room. Mr. [REDACTED] expresses the harshness of his position in dealing with sickness and incarceration. Mr. [REDACTED] said:

You know I came to Columbus and got with the wrong crowd. I started to sell drugs, steal, and do everything that I thought I was big enough to do. As you can see, it caught up with me. I'm paying the price for a hard head. I'm going back home, I hope soon. They had my hearing while I was up here, but I hope that they let me go back to West Virginia so I can just start all over again. Maybe when I get it all together I will come back to Columbus.

Later he said:

I'm sick and they don't know what it is as of yet. I just know it's because of my life style. All of those cigarettes and beer from an early age. Chappie, I'm

scared. I just made a mess of my life. I am the end result of what the fast lane will do for a young person. I lost my youth somewhere in the party. I'm like that guy who this preacher talked about. This brother went to his dad and asked for all of his stuff, money and everything. He went off and spent it all in one night and had the nerve to think that his dad would take him back after he found himself living with the pigs or something. I don't know, it was something like that.

I responded by telling him that the story was about forgiveness. Also, that my church--Love Zion had been making monthly visits and that I had used that particular text to talk on the subject of forgiveness.

He went on to say:

It stuck with me because it reminded me of myself. I have made a big mess of my life at the tender age of sixteen. I know the story was about being forgiven, but that's the hardest part for me. I have trouble forgiving others and that may be because I will not forgive myself. I'm too frightened to forgive. If I forgive, I have to forget all of the things that I have blamed others for. What I mean is when I stop blaming others there is only one person to blame for everything --me. Yea, deep down I know that I am my greatest enemy.

Charles is a victim of a perpetual system that entices young people to the streets for fast money and quick pleasure only to leave them without hope and no recourse. At the tender age of sixteen, Charles has made a mess of his life by allowing peer pressure and people who care little for him to influence his life. He cannot find God's grace in the midst of his suffering. His sickness as he believes is closely related to his wayward life style. He has not listened to his loved ones and now he is reaping the outcome of his stubbornness. Life to Charles is hopeless. He has no way out of his dilemma, yet in the struggle he feels the moving of God to think about the aspect of forgiveness. The very thought is an enigma because he is evaluating the evidence of life with his emotions that keep

pushing him toward something that he cannot come to grips with.

At first I did not like this kid because of my own biases: Anyone who would sell drugs is a low life and is a menace to society. When you add the fact that in most cases the drugs are sold in one's own community my frustration level raises even higher. As I listened to Charles, I began to feel his level of frustrations and fears of life. He showed me during the visit some of the places where he had applied for work and expounded on some of the legitimate jobs that he had worked. I thought what if I had been confronted with the woes of life that Charles has faced in his few years of struggle? How would I have been different? What would my values be? This reflection in the midst of the visit allowed me to come out of the judgmental mode and be more in tune with the pains and struggles of Charles.

Case Study # 2

Summary:

Bill is a sickle cell patient who has been brought in during a pain crisis. I met him back in March when he was in for fever and pain. He is receiving treatments for pain and taking antibiotics for an infection. Also, he has a high concentration of iron in his body that will decrease the functionality of some of his major organs. His problems are intensified because he is also an inmate in a local juvenile prison, serving time for drug trafficking. His release is scheduled for August 96. I met Bill through Susan at the clinic and have teamed up with several staff members who are attempting to assist Bill in a lasting transition back to freedom.

Mrs. [REDACTED] enters the room from her home in Cincinnati. She had gotten the word about Bill and had to depend on public transportation to get here. She said, "My baby! my baby! What have you done to my baby?"

Mommy, Mommy, its my chest. I'm hurting like I never have before. I can't stand it when I hurt like this. My whole life hurts. Do you know what I'm saying? I have messed up my life real bad. Locked-up, sick all the times. Short of bad luck, I really have no luck with life.

My mother has tried to raise me right, but I wanted to do everything my way. You know I came to Columbus and got with the wrong crowd. I started to sell drugs and steal. I'm paying the price, I have wasted my life in such a short time.

This pain is because of my hard head. I didn't hurt like this when I was a kid. Tell him mom why my pain is the way that it is.

Mrs. [REDACTED] went on to express her fears about the whole situation. She is frightened because her son's condition has gotten worse.

We were told that the infusions were necessary to keep the iron down because of the blood transfusions. Well, Bill decided that he would not take this part of his treatments because he did not see the necessity. He has a high concentration of iron in his organs. We just don't know what it really means when he has chest pains.

Chaplain, I'm scared. I just have made such a mess of my life, the divorce and all. I may have contributed more than I am willing to talk about to Bill's demise. I may have pushed him into the streets and now I am seeing the end result of what the fast lane will do to a young person. If I had known that I had the sickle cell trait I would have been more selective in choosing a mate. Keep praying for me. I forgave myself with the sickle cell, but the other part, I should have been there for him. Like when he stopped taking infusions, I should have been able to show my own son the danger in not complying with the doctor's orders.

Bill tries to console his mother by saying: "Mom, you know that you tried, but I wanted the streets and all that they had to offer. I have made a big mess of my life at this tender age and I have learned my lesson. When I get out this time, you will

see a different person.”

Bill is guilt ridden and I believe close to giving up. His burdens are more than he can see clear of, for Bill there is no way out of his dilemma. Mrs. [REDACTED] is guilt ridden also because of the disease and a divorce that according to her “pushed Bill to the streets.”

There is a lot of pain and guilt in this family. Mom blames herself for not being there for Bill and the fact that she did not know that she had the sickle cell trait. Bill deals with the physical pain and emotional stress as well as guilt. He simply believes that his wayward soul has caused the storehouse of trouble to come falling down on him.

Compassion Is Contagious

Another strategy was to invite other key personnel on one of the mission trips in hopes that they would see something that would compel them to action. It worked. By the time we got to the third visit there were fifteen to twenty people participating in this life-changing ministry. We went from a few struggling voices singing hymns to a full choir. This also increased the number of residents desiring to participate in our worship service.

I must say that people in the congregation were talking, testifying, and proclaiming the power of the “good news.” They told in Bible study and Sunday school how they were impacted during visits and challenged others to join some aspect of the mission ministry.

Hunger: The Gateway to Hopelessness

As you may recall from the text the Lord said "When I was hungry, you fed me." When we as the body of Christ really believe that where you find "suffering," you find Christ, we can make sense of what the Lord meant when He said, "When you did it to the least of these my brethren you did it to me." "Hunger," I must say that this area of "suffering" had an equal impact on participants during the visits. I made several visits during the preliminary period and must confess that this problem has devastated us as a people. Approximately 85 percent of the residents at Faith Mission were African Americans.

The visits to Faith Mission were set for five o'clock P.M. to serve dinner to some 250 residents. We had to start a day in advance in order to be ready with the food to be served. Team leaders for this ministry engaged their teams in shopping for food, preparing, transporting and serving. I prepared a short homily for the religious service. The first visit was a success in that we served all residents and had enough to offer seconds to some of the residents. Because of policy at Faith Mission we had to have three separate serving times. The first was for the families. During one of the visits my son and daughter went to represent the youth department of the church. They were devastated over the fact that homeless people looked just like you and me. My son saw a young lady and said to me, "Dad, how can she be homeless? If I were looking for a date, she meets all the requirements." I said, "Son, we just don't know how families end up here. It could

have been a bad investment, a lay-off, medical bills with no insurance or a combination of the above. We just don't know how it happens, but we can be here for them in this time of need." A short religious service was rendered with a blessing over the meal. A group of participants were assigned as personal witnesses. They strategically placed themselves at each table to not just communicate but actually break bread with the residents. This worked superbly at each service. We did not want to give the appearance that we were there to have pity but to take action and be a blessing. Through sincere communication, we were able to help one resident get home. As he said, "I came here looking for work. It didn't turn out the way I wanted. If I could get home, I would not be on the streets."

There was something undescrivable about looking into the face of hunger. The second serving was to the homeless women. The women were different than the men in the sense of still displaying some semblance of hope. They joined in the short devotion on several visits and on one occasion we were presented a solo from one of the women residents. It appeared that most of the women were from broken homes or some bad relationship. Only a few appeared to be strung out on drugs or a substance abuser. Nevertheless, there were some sixty homeless women who had no place to go and no place to find rest for their weary souls. Each day at eight A.M., they had to be out of their quarters and back on the streets. In the third group there were approximately eighty five to one hundred men who came to be fed and ministered to on each visit. They stared at me as I presented the "good news" as if it were as a meal ticket. It was as if I was saying "If you don't listen, you

don't eat." However, I noticed on about the third visit that they were in need of more than bread for the body. They were in search of hope. They were looking for some kind of relief from the daily "suffering" that was commonplace for them. The men appeared to be more than homeless. They appeared to be defeated. Like in FCJDC, there was a disproportionate number of African Americans who lived from meal to meal. Also, like the women, they were put out at 8:00 A.M., they went to no particular place to wait for the next opportunity to get a hot meal and a warm bed.

It was clear that what we were doing could be done by a collaborative effort of the church as a whole. To be more specific, more Black congregations are needed in this type of ministry. It was clear that the need was there and the resources available if the Black Church could come together with one goal and purpose. I'm not saying that this is the only role of the Black Church; however, there could be an ecumenical coalition of churches in the Black community to deal with this issue of "hunger."

While making my rounds at Children's Hospital, I met one of the families that I had seen at the homeless shelter. I presented the following case study to the general mission board of Love Zion. This excerpt was used to enhance the awareness and raise the level of consciousness in Love Zion.

Case Study # 3

Summary:

Tom is a nine year old African American male who suffers from sickle cell

anemia. He was hospitalized for pain in his legs and fever. Mary, Tom's mother, has recently been released from Grant Hospital for major surgery. During the recovery time Mary has been evicted by her landlord who is Tom's father. The two have found refuge in the comfort of the hospital over a homeless shelter.

I was walking down the halls going to visit one of my patients when I overheard a conversation between three ladies concerning prayer. I thought, "that is my area, maybe I should go in and hear more." (The ladies) were walking away and said to Mary, "I'm going to pray for you.")

I don't need prayer--Prayer does not work for me. What I need is a place to live. I'm tired of being moved from place to place. You know I've been homeless for three weeks and staying at Faith Mission a few nights; at Peace Lutheran and Trinity House. We are herded like cattle--up in the morning out on the street and then picked up later in the evening for a night of sleep.

This is the first time we have ever been homeless. I have money but we were just evicted. I don't want to raise Tom in a bad neighborhood. But, I've got to get him off the street before the weather gets worse. This sickle cell is hard on him in the winter months. I do have other family, but they are all screwed up too. My sister is a crack head with a crack baby. My life is a pitiful sight. I just want to get my own place and get away from all of this confusion. I'm not well myself, I was in the hospital when he put us out and that's why I'm homeless because I didn't have time to find a place. Faith Mission will not let you stay there during the day. You're gotten up early and put back on the streets. Now, you see what I mean when I say I don't need prayer. I need something to hold on to, something that I can touch. I know that you Chaplains pray for people and stuff, but do you ever help people find housing or anything like that?

I left Mary feeling that surely there must be more to this faith than words. Although words are comforting, her needs went far beyond words. I thought about what she had said--"God sent you here to hear me say that I did not need prayer". The Lord Jesus convincingly put emphasis on the down and out as the model for

outreach ministry. He had supper with lepers and socialized with prostitutes, the homeless, the economically outcast, the unlovable, incurables, the unwanted, and the politically bankrupt. The Lord's purpose was to ultimately say that God is for us all, not just the ones whose outward appearance clearly express their class, their status, but that all are recipients of God's mercy.

Sometimes we can present the gospel without saying the name of God. But, where do we start? How do we keep integrity when we act as if we are blind to the context in which we somehow participate? Mary and Tom needed to see the homeless Jesus who cared about the people who were in despair and with no relief in sight. I know that there are social services and other agencies, but what I believe was important to her was, how people walking in the faith (Christians) live it out.

What Does the Community Think About the Church

As I mentioned earlier in the design strategy, I had to modify my attempt to ascertain some pertinent information about the community. My main concern was why some African American churches had a low-key approach to the concept of mission work in general. My visits to twenty African-American churches were in conjunction with a research project that I was doing for Trinity Lutheran Seminary. There were nine Baptist churches selected, representing 45% of the project. The nine churches represented 11% of the Black Baptist Church population in Columbus. To assess the Disciples of Christ and the Seventh Day Adventist, I visited one church or 5% , however, the visits represented 50% of their respective

churches. My two visits to the Church of God represented 10% of the project and 33% of that denomination in the city. I visited three African Methodist Episcopal Church (AME) congregations, representing 15% of the project and 50% of the church. My visits to the Presbyterian Church and United Church of Christ represented 5% of the project and 100% of their respective denominations. Finally, I visited two Apostolic churches, representing 10% of the project, accomplishing 25% of the denomination.

During the visits, I isolated a few questions pertaining to the mission work of that particular congregation. I wanted to know what system was in place, as well as how it was carried out. I also wanted to know what the congregation envisioned as mission strategy for the twenty first century. It was observed that some congregations had elaborate mission ministry programs that were active on two fronts - local and foreign. However, most churches had no program or mission vision. After the visits, it was very difficult to understand the congregation's position on the "Great Commission" given by our Lord, in light of the money earmarked for this area of need. My visits revealed that there was a greater appreciation for foreign mission over and against local needs. In most of the churches surveyed there was a vehicle to systematically disseminate funds to a foreign mission. I found that congregants would almost always respond positively in an endeavor for a foreign cause, but almost always negatively concerning the local need. This conclusion added validity to my belief that people tend to need "hands on" experience or personal contact with a given situation in order to be actionable in

bringing about real change. It was obvious that the promotional work that had been done to raise the consciousness concerning the need to bring relief to foreign areas was working. Most interviewees felt that they were so limited in what could be done that it seemed almost ineffective to do anything. I learned that many of the churches were superficial in their mission strategy. In some cases there were a few elderly women making an attempt to do what they thought was quality mission work. However, neither the church's mission budget nor its commitment to outreach ministry was commensurate with the impact that it could have on the local community. In some churches the Mission Society was ninety nine percent female as if this life-changing work was restricted to women. Nevertheless, most of the mission ministry departments were diligent in raising monies to be given to the foreign mission cause.

The most profound lesson that I learned was that there is a great need for Christ in the world, especially in foreign missions. I must confess, prior to this research, I complained about sending money abroad because I could see so much local "suffering," but felt that this rich country would do something about local "suffering" through human resources programs. I had removed myself from any real need to feel responsible. During the research period of my project the time spent on a foreign mission to Jamaica was well worth the effort. My entire view changed. I also saw "suffering," deprivation, and poverty as I have never seen before. It was on a mountain top in Jamaica, in a place called the Infirmary where the Lord allowed me to see what I would call the "apex of human suffering." My view is now

that global mission and local missions must co-exist. There must be an aggressive strategy for both areas. I changed my whole view of missionary work in general. I now better understand the concept of “global community.” From a corporate standpoint, if local mission work is intentional, deliberate, and progressive, there would be no need for a global strategy. Every community would have geographical boundaries and individualized strategy.

The most significant fact I learned about the context was that almost half of the congregation comes to church for social reasons. Spiritual reasons were secondary. This finding is not unusual because there is a definite sociological need in every one of us, however, it does say to me that people will express their true feelings when given the opportunity to maintain anonymity. What I am implying is that if this survey had been administered orally, the outcome would have been different. Perhaps the greatest need being met would have been spiritual. This conclusion also validates a point that I will emphasize--expectations levied on Christians require them to always be on a spiritual high, anything less is a lack of faith. In addition, I have learned in working with others on this project that people will confide their real pains, hurts, and loneliness when confronted with the opportunity to minister to others. I have seen expressions of great joy from some participants on their return trips from local mission ventures. However, often a confession of their real situation would surface. Almost always the expression would be how they have been ministered to during the process of ministering to someone else. For example, one of our most gifted mission persons recently lost

her husband due to a massive heart attack. After an extremely short mourning period, she returned to her rightful position, more zealous than ever. I sense that she had internalized her pain due to the loss, but I also believed that her missionary activities gave her fellowship and purpose in life to go on. This example validates that “suffering” escalates a desire for one to reach out to others who have similar experiences. This proactive approach brings about a level of internalized healing while assisting someone else to deal with their pain.

Road to Enhanced Sensitivity

There are some obvious steps in the strategy of my project that will work across the board in any church setting. First, find out what keeps the church away from the areas of “suffering.” This may come to feeling out how the church feels about certain issues. What is the historical connection to mission and outreach ministry? What was the original vision and how is that vision lived out today? Once these questions are visited a plan of action can be conceived. This is what happened at Love Zion through this project-in-ministry. The design was geared to elevate the awareness as pertaining to the call. Through sermons, use of gifts and talents, education, and proper technique individuals were willing to go out.

The second step was to have a place to go where individuals could see for themselves just how devastating human suffering can be. The report from each visit really came to one profound point. That is, “now that I have seen

for myself, I am compelled to take action. I can no longer overlook suffering.”

Evaluation: The Impact

The process of evaluation was done on the spot after each visit. At the end of each visit, several recipients were randomly selected to evaluate what they felt had just transpired. During the fifteen visits to both facilities there was a consensus of feedback that affirmed our techniques and directions. A staff person was also randomly selected to give feedback as to their perception of what had happened in the session. All feedback was positive and encouraged our continued presence in helping them make a concerted effort to change the direction that the residents were going. “They really appreciate your type of service, it allows them to get involved in the service” was the words of one of the guards and also was the expressed feelings by the staff at Faith Mission. Another said “I look forward to your visits, because I get something out of the services for me”.

At the end of the service we gathered in a large circle for the purpose of the mission teams to reflect on what had transpired that evening. Each individual was allowed to give a one word evaluation of what they felt, their personal reflection. And, what they considered the central theme to be that the Holy Spirit had allowed to be manifested during the visit. Most conclusions were different, but there were several points that were always presented: 1) the need; 2) the benefit to the recipients; 3) the self fulfillment of being connected to the

cause of Christ in making a difference in the world; 4) the desire to tell someone back at the Love Zion how God feeds souls through this type of ministry. Teams actually grew because people spoke out in open forums. They shared their excitement, therefore raised and enhanced consciousness. This project elevated the enthusiasm in the service to humanity.

This project started with a pre-test and an annual event called the “Feast of Hope” as a means to introduce and communicate the need to be actionable in the congregation. The event was poorly attended and donations were well below expectations. However, donations were sufficient to fund the meals at Faith Missions during the research period. This event was the start of raising the consciousness because the ones who attended were challenged to be proactive.

Shortly, after the pre-test this event was held in the fellowship hall of Love Zion Baptist Church. We invited Dr. Tim Huffman, the resident missiologist at Trinity Lutheran Seminary to speak on the needs and strategy of outreach ministry. He brought a balance between foreign and local mission needs (Appendix B). The “Feast of Hope” was designed and implemented as a means to support this ministry. The event was ecumenical because several churches were invited.

After the project was completed, I needed to know what impact was made. Also I wanted to know if there had been a significant change in the attitudes of congregants at Love Zion. It is understandable that attitudes are most difficult to

measure, however, one can gauge attitudes with some degree of accuracy through the giving and participation of the congregation.

The project ended with a post-test and a second “Feast of Hope.” The second event brought together four churches. The event was hosted at Trinity Lutheran Seminary, sponsored by Love Zion Baptist Church. The keynote speaker was a Pastor and medical doctor from the Church of Christ of the Apostolic Faith. The special guest was a United Methodist pastor. The basic strategy was to challenge each church to expand its capability to disseminate by word of mouth the growing concern and need for outreach ministry. We felt that it was imperative to make other churches aware of the need and what we felt was at least a start in resolving the escalating problem. Also, each church involved could help congregants focus on the need to be actionable in their respective communities.

There was a notable change in giving and voluntarism throughout the congregation during the testing period of this project. As was mentioned, the project started with a pre-test and an event called the “Feast of Hope.” There were two purposes in this strategy. The first purpose was to have a reference point as to where the congregation stood on the issue of outreach ministry. The second strategy was to bring the church together to hear about the need for such a program. The underline goal was to energize and sensitize the church to push for a better quality of life for all of God’s people.

The post-test validated that attitudes can be changed. There were four

areas of outreach ministry that showed a remarkable increase in awareness between the pre-test and the post-test. As with the pre-test, sixty congregants were selected to take the post-test. There was a 34% increase in mission awareness, proving that the consciousness level can be raised by systematic prodding of a group. Teams and team leaders had been a catalyst in proclaiming the word of God to the internal church at Love Zion. This expanded awareness was not limited to the global needs, but a vision of positive community action as a local aspect of mission.

In the post-test, 100% of the testers or a 28% increase, now felt that the church was not inclusive to all people on the sociological scale of the “haves” and “have nots.” This validation opened the door of progress allowing the church to realize that the church must be intentional and deliberate in being and maintaining its inclusiveness.

The concept of witnessing was the greatest increase in awareness noted during the research period. This was primarily because most congregants were not feeling any individual responsibility in a witnessing ministry. This may have been because of tradition or other reasons such as fear of rejection, or seeming too aggressive. The lack of training and the lack of confidence in a well thought out witnessing strategy hindered congregants from being proactive in witnessing.

Finally, the concept of evangelization awareness showed an increase of 7% in the post-test. The disparity between witnessing and evangelization was

due to the working definition that most of the participants had conceptualized. The concept of evangelization as a process where all resources were part of the synergistic process allowed congregants to claim participation through giving. Witnessing is more individualized, therefore, engaging individuals to be more actionable in the approach and technique.

CHAPTER VI

MOVING TOWARD A SHARED VISION

My model in ministry project is designed to reengage people to be more concerned about helping hurting people. It is designed to empower people in local churches who come into contact with people in distress people. Every day, thousands of hurting people reach out to churches throughout the country. In the Black community, the Black Church has played a special role in this respect. In some communities, the Black Church may be the only institution of hope still standing. Therefore, it is the purpose of this project to provide the types of insights that are commonplace in the lives of hurting people and will cause congregants in local churches (Black Churches in particular) to be actionable in ministering to hurting people in a more effective way by raising the level of consciousness and elevating the level of compassion.

The intent of the model-in-ministry is to:

1. Offer a conceptual framework and an experiential and ongoing model for the church to become acquainted with issues which inevitably must confront each of her members;
2. Facilitate church members to have "hands on" and "up close" encounters with the disenfranchised; and to be ambassadors of

hope, comfort, and binders of the broken hearted.

3. To mobilize the laity of the church to minister to itself while reaching others who have greater needs.

It is the intention of my project to deal with the area of sensitivity while establishing an actionable approach to ministry. I have selected a passage where several separate outreach ministries could be developed. However, I have narrowed my focus to two areas that describe the paradigm. The paradigm will act as a “turn-key” for the other ministries which I will highlight only as a means to show the direction that the project could take when fully developed.

Reflections: A Look in Retrospect

The first thought that I pondered after a great deal of time during the field experience of my project, was the possibility of validating that people did not want to be reminded of the current conditions that are commonplace in numerous communities in Columbus, Ohio. Would my research prove that some had no desire to be sensitive to the plight of “have-not”? I thought that the congregation at Love Zion could take the position of disconnecting with the problem of hopelessness. After all, my proof text in this project is eschatological and the gospel does not require any actionable response to needy people as a condition to one’s own relationship to Christ. I also pondered the possibility of my project sounding like I advocated works righteousness as a means to salvation. Was I beating people over the head trying to get them to feel

compassion? Was it my job to challenge people to action or was that something that the Holy Spirit would inspire the church to do? I thought that I might appear to bring back the age old argument of works versus faith as a means to be in a proper relationship with God. I found myself saying, "We are saved by grace, not of works" and on the other hand I was quoting James, "Show me your faith and I will show you my work."

It was very clear to me that the "Word became flesh" in order to show us as a people what it really means to be in right relationship with God. As I reflected, I claimed the works of Christ as the means and motivation to my direction. For example, Jesus was inclusive in every aspect of His ministry. He embraced lepers, supped with the outcast, drank with some of the crooked politicians of His day, and lifted women to their God given status. People knew by Christ's actions that God was in fact saying "yes" to the whole of creation. We are loved in spite of who we are. "Jesus Christ is the righteous; and He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world" (1John 2: 1-2).

The power that comes from these words in 1 John gives me the divine audacity to say that the blood of Christ was shed for all, although, all will not embrace this "good news." However, one's decision does not nullify the effectual works of Christ in reconciling all of humanity. If the ramifications of sin in the world came about because of the sin of Adam and Eve, how do we find relief? We find relief through the blood of Christ - "God in Christ reconciling the

world to Himself" (1 Corinthians 5: 19). This theology energizes me to be proactive in my approach to outreach ministry. Following the example of Jesus, we must also be inclusive in our approach. There can be no one anywhere who is out of the reach of the blood that brings relief and renewed relationship with God.

There are several conclusions that are made that will make this project adaptable for any church setting.

Summary

"Suffering" - what is it? How does it inform my project? What is the relationship between physical, economical, and the spiritual conditions of humanity, hunger, sickness, loneliness, and incarceration? What are some actionable responses to address the problem of "suffering"? What do I hope to gain if consciousness is raised in some of the areas of need? If raised, what difference will it make in the world? Why is there a need for African American churches to be more sensitive? What system is now in place? Is it effective? Why not?

I have attempted in this project to deal with some of the questions that I have posed in the above paragraph. The project has dealt with addressing some of the needs of the African American community by attempting to raise the consciousness in the church. There is a two-part benefit in raising awareness. First, it brings life and vitality back into the worship service. Congregants find

new energy in living out the true meaning of being in Christ. By focusing on the words of our Lord in the gospel of Matthew 25:31f, we are challenged to be proactive in our approach to worship. It seems to me that worship is also the reality of the “Word” becoming flesh. The worship service becomes a place where congregants are inspired to be the hands and feet of Christ in setting captives free. Our good work has purpose in that it becomes hope for the hopeless. When it is clear that my good deeds are not my ticket to some place where there is “no more suffering” but in fact, my good deeds are my connection to bring relief to those who suffer. When this is the view of a congregation, it has truly arrived to a place of renewed sensitivity. From the text mentioned above it is clear that where you find “suffering” you find Jesus. He said, “When I was hungry; Jail...” If our enthusiasm and motivation for going into the place where evil has raised its ugly head and inflicted weary souls is predicated on the life of Christ, then I am revitalized because my view of worship has been expanded.

The second benefit for raising awareness is that people will be touched and lives will change along the way. Presenting solutions, even if they only appear to be quick fixes, will communicate to people that someone cares. I recall a man on one of the field visits to a homeless center saying in response to me handing him a cool drink and saying may God bless you: “I am truly blessed by your presence. I’m sure there are many things that you could be doing on a beautiful Saturday, but you chose to bless me.”

At Love Zion, I intended to use my project to get various persons in leadership positions to gain “hands- on” experience by coming face to face with people who could be called the “disinherited” of our community. In the initial stage of developing the project, I was campaigning to solicit help for meal services at a local homeless center. The real goal was to get people committed to put “legs” on the “good news.” We had made several trips and received very little support from the congregation as a whole. My strategy was to get a few key personnel in various prominent positions to go on a field visit with the mission team. Subsequently, after rotating various ministries through this life giving indoctrination, it became evident that we had raised the level of sensitivity in an area where it was greatly needed. This was unmistakable by the number of people who donated goods and signed up to assist us on the next visit. We had allowed the principle of compassion to impact the core of the congregation in a profound way.

As I have mentioned, I have learned in working with others on this project that people will confide their real pains, hurts, and loneliness when confronted with the opportunity to minister to others. On their return trips from local mission ventures often a confession of their real situation would surface. Almost always the expression would be how they have been ministered to during the process of ministering to someone else.

Conclusions: The Outcome

I found it somewhat difficult to get target areas outside of the congregation to cooperate with what I had in mind for my project. If I had not started early in getting through the bureaucracy, I would not have had time to make all the visits I needed to make in order to validate my position. However, this difficulty allowed me to see early that my original plan to cover all the areas that I had intended would have been very cumbersome to do in the time frame of my field experience.

I learned in my structured experience that two simultaneous goals can be achieved if framed and implemented with intentionality and focus. I intended to raise the level of sensitivity in Love Zion while creating outreach ministries that would be catalysts in proclaiming God's reconciliation.

I learned that people are not really dull in their sensitivity toward the "disinherited," but often lack direction in the approach. They are not focused on specific goals. They have enthusiasm and untapped skills but no strategies and techniques. They cannot bring good intentions alone into structured action that brings relief to the poor. The mission society in Love Zion Baptist Church was made up of predominately elderly women who were some of the hardest working women that I had ever seen. They had become part of a tradition that embraced "in-house" study as more productive than actual field contact. Many of the women served as contextual associates and readily accepted a part on one of the teams. There was an excitement that compelled others to take part because these missionaries were very expressive in communicating to all who would hear

what they were involved in. There were a few men who were caught up in the tradition also. They wanted to be part of the established mission ministry, but felt that it was for women only. This project challenged men and younger women to take part.

Teams were diverse in age and gender as we made visits to our target areas. The appeal was that our presence was one of our greatest tools in communicating God's grace to the "down and out." We wanted male and female team members to dispel the myth that most churches are just a bunch of old women with nothing else to do. That was the last thing we wanted to communicate. We wanted men on the teams who were willing to meet residents and detainees in the pit of their despair. Our strategy was on target in that most of the small group conversation with detainees pointed to one cause for their current status. Some juveniles alleged that their demise could be attributed to lack of a male role model in their lives. The lack of male role models as a reason for the problem surfaced many times. This subject was our appeal to get more men involved as mentors as we made our visits. In the FCJDC this problem was not just common with the males, but the females also. Some young ladies said that they had gotten into trouble looking for the love that they never found in a father figure. One said that she tried to fulfil the void in her life by being in gangs and as it turned out, she ended up with a baby at age fourteen. In her despair and desperation, she found herself doing time in FCJDC because she was trying to find relief in all the wrong places.

Out of elevated sensitivity and enhanced enthusiasm, a group of people took it upon themselves to be bearers of “good news.” Initially, I had no knowledge of how the sentiments would be manifested. They shared in every aspect of worship services at Love Zion. During Bible study they made illustrations or reflected on some event that validated a particular point that was being made. Also, during praise and prayer service someone would testify about how the Lord touched them as they ministered to some homeless person or youth at FCJDC.

One thing that I would have done differently would have been to reverse the order of the post- test and the “Feast of Hope.” It was clear that the “feast” in itself was an event that enhanced the awareness of “suffering.” Out of curiosity, or other reasons, I do not know, but to be sure, the event was a top of the line affair. It was well attended by Love Zion. All officials attended and were in essence debriefed by our keynote speaker, who was one of the pastors interviewed. Enthusiasm about the project exuded from the community and it was indeed contagious. Other churches sent representatives from their mission and outreach ministries to hear about our initiative and to explore possibilities of replicating. I think that the post-test at the end of the project would have been more representative of the entire change in attitude and awareness. It was obvious that the “Feast of Hope” made a great impression on all who attended. I felt that the “gut” of individuals had been twisted and renewed compassion would compel them to action.

Another change I would recommend is to cut back on the number of visits to the youth facility and have five visits to an elderly home or nursing home. When the Lord said in my selected text, "When I was a stranger you took me in," it was a means to deal with the emptiness and loneliness that pervades one's life. The rationale for this suggested change is that in church there are numerous people who are frightened at the possibility of being isolated, put away in some place to live out the last years. By sending teams to this area of "suffering" would cover a more diverse area, therefore, increasing the opportunity to motivate more of the congregation to action..

In addition, I would have worked harder to get the visits video taped for media coverage. If prohibitions precluded taping on the inside, our reflection sessions would have been taped. There were many sessions that could have been presented at Bible study or Sunday school.

Also, the art club and youth ministry could have been utilized more in communicating and proclaiming through art and drama. Some of the pictures that were captured could have been replicated through the eyes of a child by paintings. These renditions could have been posted throughout the church during this period of awareness enhancement.

APPENDIX A**PRETEST: Mission Sensitivity**

Please answer each question as honestly as possible. Choose one answer for each question.

1. The Word Gospel means:
☐ forgiveness
☐ good news
☐ salvation
☐ soul-winner
2. Personal evangelism (witnessing) refers to:
☐ a weekly visitation program of the local church.
☐ an individual Christian witnessing to lost persons.
☐ an enrollment of lost persons in Sunday School.
☐ a program started by the Baptist Convention of America, Inc.
3. Do you think that personal mission should be a top priority of our church:
☐ yes
☐ no
4. Is outreach ministry a top priority in your life at this present time?
☐ yes
☐ no
5. When was the last time you witnessed to a lost person?
☐ within the last week
☐ within the last month
☐ within the last six months
☐ more than six months
☐ never
6. Is the church inclusive to poor, needy and the socially outcast.
☐ yes
☐ no
7. Have you ever had any training in how to be an effective witness for Christ?
☐ yes

- ___ no
8. Have you actually led another person to Christ as Savior?
___ yes
___ no
9. I believe Christians should be concerned for the unsaved and unchurched of our community.
___ yes
___ no
10. I believe it is acceptable for some Christians to live their faith and never verbally share the gospel.
___ yes
___ no
11. I believe more Christians would witness if they were properly trained and motivated.
___ yes
___ no
12. Personal evangelism (witnessing) is not primarily something you do, but what you are, as a believer.
___ yes
___ no
13. A close, personal relationship to God enables a Christian to be a missionary.
___ yes
___ no
14. What is the main reason you do not witness?
___ I do not believe it is my task as a Christian.
___ I do not want to be considered fanatic.
___ I fear embarrassment, rejection, and failure.
___ I do not know how to start and what to say.
___ I do not love lost people as I should.
15. I should develop friendships because the Gospel is received better in context of relationships.
___ yes
___ no

16. I look for situations and needs in which I can share my faith in Jesus Christ.
☐ yes
☐ no
17. I am confident that the local community is as important as the foreign mission field.
☐ yes
☐ no
18. If I witness to a lost person and he/she decides not to accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, then I have failed as a witness.
☐ yes
☐ no
19. A real love for God will have a corresponding love for people.
☐ yes
☐ no
20. God will save sinners because God gives the church the necessary gifts and talents to reach people who are lost.
☐ yes
☐ no
21. God does not expect me to witness to persons who are different from me in age, sex, status, or race.
☐ yes
☐ no
22. I believe that some people are just too "worldly" to waste time on in trying to missionize.
☐ yes
☐ no
23. I believe that my gift is money. My giving is my contribution to making Christ available to the lost.
☐ yes
☐ no
24. I have important responsibilities such as family, job and neighbors that I should consider before I witness to lost persons.
☐ yes
☐ no

25. I know a plan of salvation that I can verbally share with another person.
☐ yes
☐ no
26. Which one of the following is true?
☐ Only certain trained Christians are real missionaries.
☐ Laymen are ministers of Christ and are as responsible for the lost as pastors.
☐ God desires to use only media and revivals to evangelize the world.
☐ Worship and fellowship are always more important than preaching and outreach ministry.
27. Which answer best defines sources of power in witnessing?
☐ clean life, good reputation, and education.
☐ regular church attendance, tithing, and prayer.
☐ prayer, scripture memory, and willingness
☐ education, scripture memory, and clean life
28. I believe that personal follow-up in evangelism is vital.
☐ yes
☐ no
29. I believe that it is important for new believers to learn how to witness as soon as possible.
☐ yes
☐ no
30. If I desire to be in closer fellowship with God, I can:
☐ neglect personal witnessing for lost persons.
☐ pray that God will give that task to someone else.
☐ substitute other spiritual disciplines for witnessing.
☐ grow as an active, loving witness to lost persons.

PRE-TEST

RESULTS FROM 60 QUESTIONNAIRES

All responses represent percentages

- | | | | |
|-----|--|-----|--|
| 1. | 76 - correct
24 - incorrect | 16. | 85 - yes
15 - no |
| 2. | 88 - correct
12 - incorrect | 17. | 86 - yes
14 - no |
| 3. | 60 - yes
40 - yes | 18. | 8 - yes
92 - no |
| 4. | 61 - yes
39 - no | 19. | 96 - yes
2 - no
2 - do not know |
| 5. | 12 - last week
25 - last month
19 - last six months
42 - over six months
2 - never | 20. | 69 - yes
29 - no
2 - do not know |
| 6. | 28 - yes
72 - no | 21. | 15 - yes
83 - no
2 - do not know |
| 7. | 53 - yes
47 - no | 22. | 33 - yes
64 - no
3 - do not know |
| 8. | 34 - yes
64 - no
2 - do not know | 23. | 61 - yes
37 - no
2 - do not know |
| 9. | 100 - yes
0 - no | 24. | 41 - yes
57 - no
2 - do not know |
| 10. | 34 - yes
64 - no | 25. | 78 - yes
17 - no |
| 11. | 97 - yes | | |

3 - no

5 - do not know

12. 83 - yes
15 - no
2 - do not know

26. 63 - correct
37 - incorrect

13. 98 - yes
2 - no

27. 59 - correct
41 - incorrect

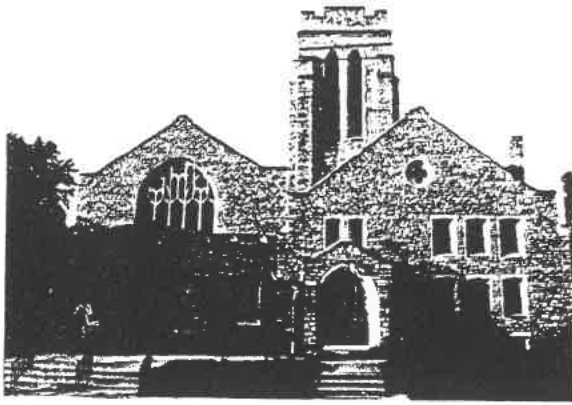
14. 44 - no answer
2 - #1
2 - #2
17 - #3
32 - #4
3 - #5

28. 90 - yes
3 - no
7 - do not know

29. 90 - yes
5 - no
5 - do not know

15. 87 - yes
10 - no
3 - do not know

30. 88 - correct
12 - incorrect



Love Zion ¹¹² Baptist Church

1459 Madison Avenue • Columbus, Ohio 43205-1580

Dial-A-Prayer: 258-7445

Office: (614) 258-2216

Home: [REDACTED]

Rev. Jesse L. Wood, Pastor

APPENDIX B

May 5, 1995
First A. M. E. Zion
Bryden & S. 18th Street
Columbus, OH 43205

Dear Pastor:

It gives me great pleasure to bring you up to date on what we are doing in the mission field here at Love Zion. We have made a commitment to the Lord that we would not accept failure by default in the fight against world hunger.

On May 20, 1995 at 6:30 PM, here at Love Zion we are making a step in the right direction by holding our First "Feast of Hope" to raise awareness and funds to support our Mission Ministry. We envision bringing hope to many who appeared to be in a hopeless state. We are continuing the fight by earmarking all proceeds from this event for domestic and foreign mission needs.

See the attached leaflet for more information on the speaker.

This will be an excellent night for your missionary department to come and see how to expand its ministry.

Let me thank you in advance for your support. I have enclosed an envelope for your contribution in the event that you or representatives are unable to attend. However, if you are able to attend, please RSVP by May 16, 1995.

In That Matchless Name,

Rev. Bennie T. Henson, Sr.
Director of Missions

"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."
St. John 15:13

APPENDIX C

Sermon Brief One

Date: August 1995

Title: "The Missionary: A Witness for Christ"

Text: Act 1:8

Introduction: The authentic church in the first century was consistent. They were called out from to salvation, and they shared Jesus Christ. In doing so they were performing evangelism. Which in doing so they were performing evangelism. Which denotes the natural result of a Christ-filled, a live body simply existing and functioning within a community. Evangelism is the outflow of the overflow of the Christ life within a church body. The first century church followed the Lord's instructions in evangelism by carrying out Christ methodology.

- I. Having the priority "Witnesses unto me."
 - A. God expects the church to possess the right priorities.
 - B. Sharing Christ by witnessing of what one has seen and what one knows of Jesus.
- II. Having the plan "In Jerusalem and in all Judea and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth."
 - A. Christ's plan for evangelism was to witness in an ever-extending series. It began in Jerusalem and went throughout Judea; then Samaria the semi-Jewish state and would be a kind of bridge leading out into the heathen world. Finally, the witness was to go to the end of the earth.
 - B. The Plan of Christ is to use His people to win the World to himself.
 1. Tell the story to unsaved family members.
 2. Tell the story on your job, and places one frequents.
 3. Tell the story in the community of church.
 4. Tell the story everywhere you go.
- III. Having the personnel "Ye shall be witnesses unto me."
 - A. The personnel "Ye shall be witnesses unto me."
 1. Every Sunday the personnel gather they must understand they are Christ workers.
 - B. The laity can no longer depend on the pastor and paid staff to tell the story. They must do it as well.
- IV. Having the power "ye shall receive power after the Holy Spirit is come upon

you”

A. The power is the Holy Spirit.

1. He will empower one to stand up and testify for Christ.

Conclusion: Every believer needs to not only stop by Calvary to be forgiven but also pass by Pentecost to be empowered to be a witness for Jesus.

APPENDIX D

Sermon Brief Two

Date: September 1995

Title: The Great Commission: Doing the Work of Christ

Text: Matthew 28: 18-20

Introduction: The last words of Christ were given to the church that she may carry out the Christian mandate. Namely to become and be an evangelistic church. The local church and its members must choose evangelism as its central life and work. Our churches can become more evangelistic as we strive to go, teach, and baptize.

- I. The mandate to "go ye therefore"
 1. It applies to all believers.
 - a. Not just preachers and select few
 - b. No excuse why millions of Christians who neglect the great commission
 2. The early church was one that went out sharing the invitation of salvation.
 3. Evangelize according to one's ability and direction from God.
- II. The mandate to teach "teach all nations"
 1. Teach comes from the Greek word *matheteuo* which carries the connotation to make disciples and enroll as a learner or pupil.
 2. Teach Christ's truths
 - a. To love each other
 - b. To grow in wisdom and status
 - c. To advance the kingdom
 - d. To teach the gospel
 - e. To win the lost
- III. The mandate to baptize, "Baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit."
 1. Baptize them into Christ or into His body as repentance and new-birth.
 2. Baptize them with water and pray that God baptizes them with the Holy Spirit.
- IV. The mandate in regards to teaching, "Teaching them to observe all things"
 1. Teaching in the Greek comes from the word *didasko* which denotes giving instructions. The idea here is more on instruction than enrolling.
 2. Instructing converts in Christian doctrine
 3. Instructing converts in Christian ethics

Conclusion: The need of the twentieth century church is to obey the great commission of Christ. The main task of the Lord's fellowship is to evangelize the world, baptize and teach persons to observe the instruction of Jesus.

APPENDIX E

Sermon Brief Three

Date: October 1995

Title: True Ambassadors of Christ

Text: II Corinthians 5: 18-21

Introduction: As ambassadors of Christ we are to tell of the ministry of reconciliation. That God was in Christ, and God's purpose was to reconcile man back to Himself. As one is reconciled to God, He has reconciled the ambassadors for Christ to reconcile others.

- I. The Born again Christian is expected to witness.
 - 1. The ambassadors witness
 - 2. The ambassador's message is to tell others to come before winter
- II. The born again Christian is to assist in reconciling others.
- III. The born again Christian is empowered to witness.
- IV The ambassadors power comes from Christ.

Conclusion: Every born again believer is a witness, and a royal ambassador of Christ. We are encouraged and exhorted to tell others of the goodness of our Father.

APPENDIX F

Sermon Brief Four

Date: November 1995

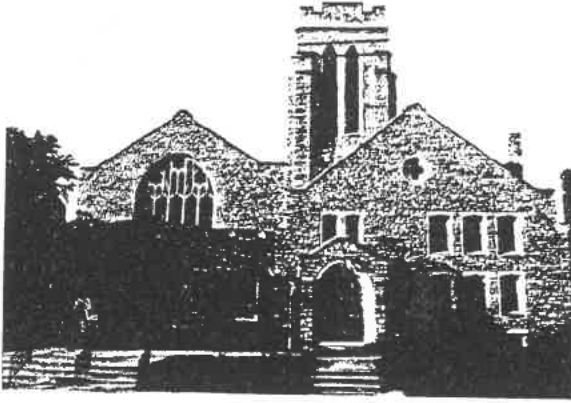
Title: Enhanced Consciousness for the Lost

Text: Romans 9: 1-3

Introduction: The cure for our churches' evangelistic apathy is a conscience that aches for the lost. The Church must capture again the burden for the lost. Paul's burden was deep for unbelievers and the church must possess Paul's burden as well. The conversion of an unbeliever is a central task for the twentieth century church.

- I. The strength of sinner conviction "I speak the truth in Christ I am not lying."
 1. Paul's way of life had an inner compassion for those who did not know Christ.
- II. The strength of sinner sorrow "great heaviness and continual sorrow"
 1. Paul's way of life showed great sorrow.
 - a. Mega sorrow felt by Paul
 - b. Soul sorrow felt by Paul
 - c. Unceasing anguish sorrow felt by Paul
 2. The rekindling of the churches' flame to such strength of inward sorrow
 3. Ask God to change our attitude to His perspective.
- III. The strength of sinner sacrifice "cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brethren."
 1. Paul's inner conviction for the lost comes from his willingness to make personal sacrifices.
 2. Paul had a heart that ached for the lost, and He was willing to pay the ultimate sacrifice to win the lost.

Conclusion: In curing the church's apathy for the lost Paul's example gives important insight. Yet, the vision must be conceptualized that our churches can be helped.



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Rev. Jesse L. Wood, Pastor

APPENDIX G

LOVE ZION FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

MISSION MINISTRY

Please write your name and telephone number by the ministry on which you would like to serve

COMMITTEE	NAME	PHONE
Hunger	_____	_____
Prison	_____	_____
Sick	_____	_____
Lonely	_____	_____
Clothing	_____	_____
Thirsty	_____	_____

Please place in offering basket

"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."
St. John 15:13

APPENDIX H
SPIRITUAL GIFTS ASSESSMENT



SPIRITUAL GIFTS INVENTORY QUESTIONNAIRE

INSTRUCTIONS

This booklet is designed to be combined with an answer sheet.
DO NOT MARK IN THIS BOOKLET. If you do not have an answer sheet, see back page.

Read each statement and decide how it pertains to you. If the statement fits you 70% to 100% of the time, then darken-in circle ① **Almost Always**. If the statement fits you 40% to 70% of the time, then darken-in circle ② **Occasionally**. If the statement fits you less than 40% of the time, then darken-in ③ **Not Very Often**.

Most of the statements deal with your feelings or desires, so be sure to give YOUR OWN opinion of yourself. Do not leave any spaces blank. Be sure to let your responses reflect how you feel at the present time. Remember there is no right or wrong answers.

To grade, separate answer sheets and follow instructions on page 2.

Published by:



Church Growth Institute

P.O. Box 4404, Lynchburg, VA 24502

**DO NOT MARK IN THIS BOOK
USE WITH ANSWER SHEET**

1. I have a consuming passion for lost souls.
2. I put great importance on repentance.
3. I believe I am very discerning of other people's motives.
4. When I speak, I wish to stir the consciences of others.
5. I have an unusually strong desire to study the Word of God.
6. I put great importance on education.
7. When I do something, I like to see "tangible" results for my efforts.
8. When I speak to a group, my message usually deals with topics, not verse by verse studies.
9. I am willing to assume a long-term personal responsibility for the spiritual welfare of a group of believers.
10. I am people centered, I need many relationships in my life.
11. I am usually soft spoken.
12. I am patient, but am willing to respond to other's needs quickly.
13. I am fulfilled by performing routine tasks in the church for God's glory.
14. I am usually involved in a variety of activities that help other people.
15. I keep myself and my business affairs well organized.
16. I have a burden to support missions.
17. I make decisions based strictly on facts and proven data.
18. I can communicate goals in a way that others may fulfill them.
19. I believe salvation is the greatest gift of all.
20. Some people think my witnessing tactics are pushy.
21. I can spot sin when other people can't.
22. I feel a great need to expose sin in others.
23. I like to use visuals and books to support me when I am speaking.
24. I am constantly analyzing for better ways to do and say things.
25. I believe I am a very practical person.
26. I am able to help others when they have personal problems.
27. I am willing to spend large amounts of time in prayer for other people.
28. I enjoy looking after the spiritual welfare of others; I am protective.
29. I find it very easy to express my feelings.
30. I have a real burden to comfort others.
31. I prefer to be out of the public eye to be fulfilled.
32. I am burdened with the physical needs of others.
33. When I give, I want it to be a private matter between me and God.
34. I am sensitive to the financial and material needs of others.
35. I am goal oriented, as opposed to being people or content oriented.
36. I work best under pressure.
37. I have a desire to meet lost people, even when they are total strangers.
38. I would rather witness than do anything else.

CONTINUE TO NEXT PAGE

78. Others accuse me of giving too many details.
79. I have the ability to motivate others.
80. Unpractical teaching upsets me.
81. I wish to give direction to those under my care.
82. I am willing to study whatever is necessary in order to feed those I am working with.
83. My heart goes out to the poor, the aged, the ill, the under-privileged, etc.
84. I seem to attract people who are hurting or rejoicing.
85. I am already helping people while others are still talking about it.
86. I am quick to respond to others need for help.
87. I want to know my financial gift is being used properly.
88. I may judge others' success by the amount of their material assets.
89. I want to be a winner, I can't bear defeat.
90. I am capable of making quick decisions and sticking to them.
91. When I witness to a lost person I always press for a decision.
92. Others think I am more interested in numbers than in people.
93. You must "prove" me wrong, before I will go along with you.
94. Studying is not my bag; I rely on others to do my background work for me.
95. I find other teachers' material hard to present, I would develop my own.
96. I put great emphasis on word pronunciation.
97. Other people think I am not evangelistic because of my emphasis on personal growth.

98. I am accused of not using enough Scripture when teaching.
99. I enjoy doing a wide variety of activities without being confined to only one.
100. I perceive myself as a shepherd.
101. I am an emotional person, I cry easily.
102. I identify emotionally and mentally with others.
103. Some people think I neglect spiritual needs.
104. I enjoy mechanical jobs in the church.
105. I may measure others spirituality by the amount of their giving.
106. Others think I am trying to control them with my money.
107. When there is no leadership in a group, I will assume it.
108. I have the ability to organize and harmonize the people I work with.

END

ANSWER SHEETS

A self grading, two-part carbonless, answer sheet to be combined with this questionnaire is available. Prices are as follows:

1-9 copies	\$1.00 each
10-49 copies	\$.75 each
50-99 copies	\$.50 each
100 or more	\$.40 each

To order send check or money order and address to:



Church Growth Institute

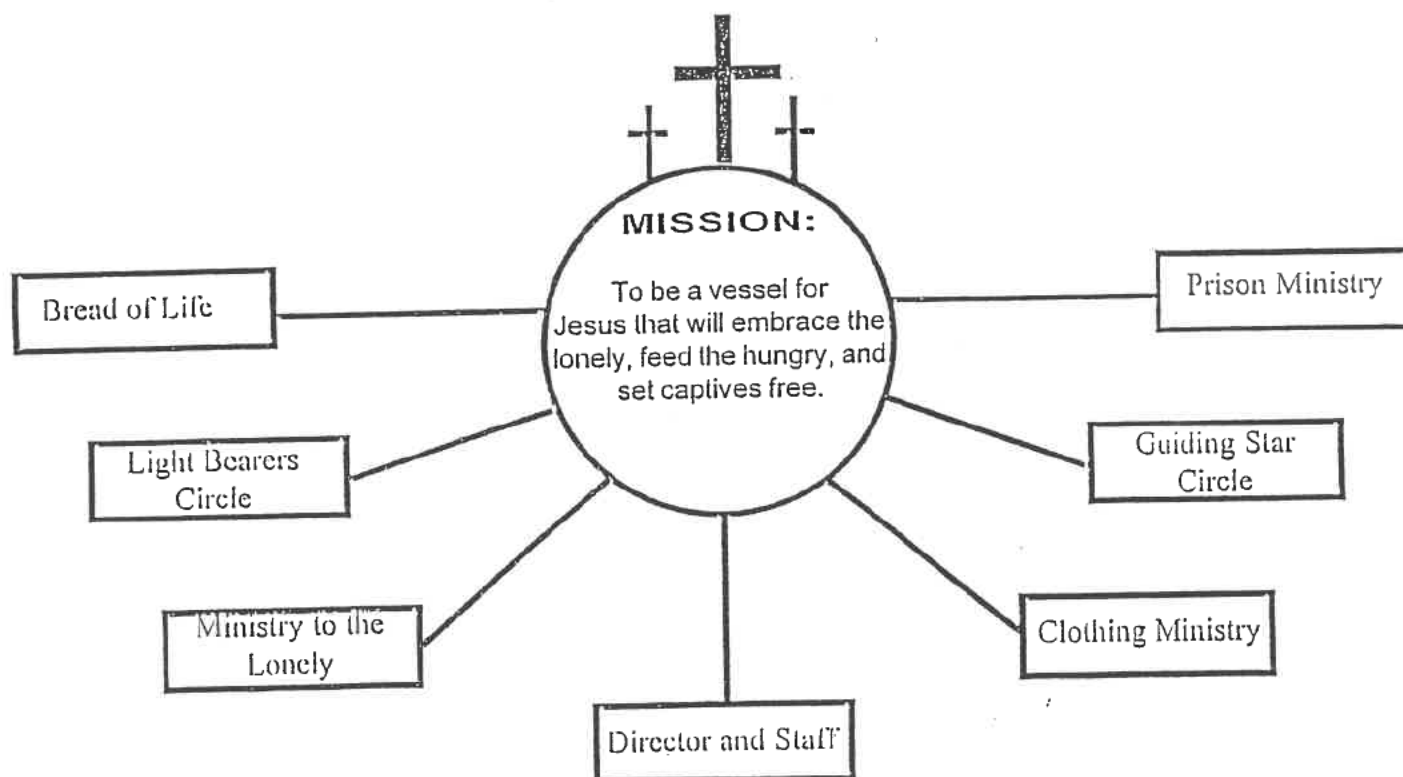
P.O. Box 4404, Lynchburg, VA 24502

APPENDIX I
LOVE ZION PARADIGM

LOVE ZION BAPTIST CHURCH

Department of Missions Ministry

"For the least of these"



"Where praise and service come together"

APPENDIX J**TRAINING SESSION ONE**

August 1995

SESSION FOCUS: INTRODUCTION

- I. Introduction to the course
 - A. Devotion
 - B. Course overview
- II. Importance of witness and evangelizing as missionaries
 - A. The Evangelism Mandate
 - B. Five types of evangelism
 - 1. Personal Evangelism
 - 2. Pastoral Evangelism
 - 3. Visitation Evangelism
 - 4. Education Evangelism
 - 5. Revival Evangelism
 - C. The lost act of sharing Christ
- III. Evangelism Philosophy (Handout # 1)
- IV. Mission Motto
 - Every man, woman and child has been "died for," therefore, has been reconciled.

APPENDIX K

HANDOUT # 1

GROUP EVANGELISM TRAINING PHILOSOPHY¹

Training concepts and philosophy in the student evangelist training group include the following:

1. Evangelism is to be Christ-centered and church-centered.
2. A vital relationship with God is essential. Christians need to grow spiritually toward maturity in Christ. They need to develop personal habits of daily prayer and Bible study.
3. Personal witness is not optional for Christians.
4. Witnessing is not primarily something you do but what you are. The lifestyle witness is everything the Christian does as well as the specific evangelistic act of encounter.
5. Sensitivity to others in the normal traffic pattern of life is a skill the Christian witness needs to develop.
6. Evangelism is not complete without the verbal witness.
7. Christians need the freedom and opportunity to develop their own style of witness according to their own personality and spiritual gifts.
8. Evangelism is most effective when relationship precedes witness.
9. Witnessing involves listening as well as speaking.
10. Religious terminology must be translated into everyday vocabulary.
11. Evangelism is one part of a well-balanced ministry.

¹ Growing an Evangelistic Church Guidebook, (Atlanta: Home Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, 1976), 299.

APPENDIX L**TRAINING SESSION TWO**

September 1995

SESSION FOCUS: THE ART OF WITNESSING AS A MISSIONARY

- I. Characteristics involved in Soul-Winning (Handout # 2)
- II. How to witness (Handout # 3)
- III. The resources for witnessing (Handout #4)
- IV. Soul-winning as Jesus did it in John 4
 - A. Made a tactful approach - verse 7
 - B. Aroused a deep interest - verse 10
 - C. Created an intense desire - verse 15
 - D. Produced a sense of conviction - verses 16, 17
 - E. Corrected a misunderstanding - verse 19-24
 - F. Revealed himself as Messiah - verse 28
 - G. Secured a public confession - verse 28-31, 39
- V. Evangelism Motto

Every man, woman and child has been "died for," therefore, has been reconciled.

APPENDIX M

HANDOUT # 2

TEN CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SOUL-WINNING²

1. A personal experience with Christ in spiritual regeneration
2. A reasonable consistent Christian character and consecrated course of conduct
3. A soul - longing to see the lost saved and to have a share in their salvation
4. A working knowledge of the Word of God and a deep purpose of soul to go deeper into its fathomless reaches of spiritual wisdom.
5. A love - loyalty to Christ, His truth, and the on-going of His militant Kingdom
6. An increasing sense of the presence and the power of the Holy Spirit in life and prayer
7. The development and growth of a communing prayer-life-the persistent habit of prayer
8. A confident faith in the power of Christ and His Gospel agencies to save the uttermost the worst of sinners
9. A deep conviction of the sinner's need (for Christ)
10. A loving, approachable, humanitarian disposition wrought in the soul-winner by the kindness and kingliness of Christ

² L. R. Scarborough, *A Search for Souls*, (Nashville: The Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, 1925), 13-16; also see Francis M. Cosgrove, Jr., *Essentials of Discipleship*, (Colorado Springs: Navpress, (1980), 105-106.

APPENDIX N**HANDOUT # 3****HOW TO WITNESS³****John 4**

1. Contact others socially - vv. 1-7
2. Establish common ground - vs. 9
3. Arouse interest - vv. 10-15
4. Get the ball rolling - vv. 10-11
5. Don't go too far - vv. 13-19
6. Don't condemn - John 8:11
7. Stick with the main issue - vv. 20-26
8. Confront the person directly - vs. 28

³Paul Little, *How to give Your Faith Away*, (Chicago: Inter-Varsity Press, 1966), 46-70.

APPENDIX O**HANDOUT #4****SPIRITUAL RESOURCES TO WITNESS⁴**

1. The need for continued Christian growth
 - A. Several verses examined
 1. John 15: 1-11
 2. 2 Peter 3: 18
 3. Colossians 1:29
 - B. Mature and skilled believers are most likely to witness
 - C. Witnessing is improved when believers rely on spiritual resources
2. Eight spiritual resources for a witnessing life
 - A. Word of God
 - B. Prayer
 - C. Consecration
 - D. Quiet Time
 - E. Church
 - F. Holy Spirit
 - G. Fellowship of Christians
 - I. Faith

⁴ Paul Little, *How to Give Your Faith Away*, (Chicago: Inter-Varsity Press, 1988), 116-130, and Crawford Evangelife, *A Guide to Life-style Evangelism*, 43-54.

APPENDIX P**TRAINING SESSION THREE**

October 1995

SESSION FOCUS: SHARING PERSONAL TESTIMONY

- I. Let the redeemed of the Lord say so
 - A. Follow Paul's example of sharing personal testimony as recorded in Acts 22: 1-16
 - 1. I have not always been a Christian - vv. 3-5
 - 2. God showed me my need of Christ - vv. 6-9
 - 3. I committed my life to Christ - vv. 10-13
 - 4. My life in Christ is different - vv. 14-16
 - B. Preparing one's personal testimony
 - 1. Consider the importance of your testimony
 - 2. Keep it short and sweet
 - 3. Stick to the point
 - 4. Give adequate details
 - 5. Avoid bragging and negative remarks
 - 6. Explain church words
 - 7. Be prepared to share personal testimony
 - C. My testimony (Handout # 5)
 - 1. My life before receiving Christ
 - 2. How I realized I needed Christ
 - 3. How I received Christ
 - 4. How Jesus makes my life meaningful
- II. Evangelism Motto

Every man, woman and child has been "died for," therefore, has been reconciled.

APPENDIX Q

TRAINING SESSION FOUR

November 1995

SESSION FOCUS: PRESENTING THE PLAN OF SALVATION

- I. Suggested Plans of Salvation
 - A.
 1. Romans 3:10 Who is good?
 2. Romans 3:23 Who has sinned?
 3. Romans 5:15 Where did sin come from?
 4. Romans 6:23 God's price on sin
 5. Romans 5:8 The sinners' way out
 6. Romans 10:9-10 The sinners' response
 7. Romans 10:13 God's promise
 - B. The Gospel Hand (Handout # 6)
 1. Thumb - God's purpose - John 3:16
 - a. Receive eternal life as a free gift
Romans 6:23
 - b. Live a full and meaningful life
John 14:3
 2. Pointer Finger - Our need - Romans 3:23
 - a. We are all sinners
Romans 3:23
 - b. We cannot save ourselves
Ephesians 2:9
 - c. We deserve death and hell
Romans 6:23
 3. Index Finger - God's provision - John 14:6
 - a. Jesus is God who became man
John 1:1-14
 - b. Jesus died for us
I. Peter 3:18; Isaiah 53:6
 - c. Jesus rose from the dead
Romans 4:25
 4. Ring Finger - Our response - John 1:12
 - a. We must repent
Acts 3:19; 26:20
 - b. We must have faith in Jesus
Ephesians 2:8; James 2:19
 - c. We must commit our lives to Jesus as Lord
Romans 10:9-10

5. Pinky Finger - Our prayer - Romans 10:13
 - a. Prayer for understanding
 - b. Prayer of commitment
 - c. Prayer of Thanksgiving
- C. Another suggested plan of salvation
 1. God loves you - John 3:16
 2. Eternal life is abundant - John 10:10b
 3. We are sinners - Romans 3:23
 4. Eternal life is God's free gift - Romans 6:23
 5. Christ died for us - Romans 5:8
 6. We must receive Christ - John 1:12
 7. We must repent of our sins - Acts 3: 19
 8. Confess, believe, and ask - Romans 10:9-10,13

II. Evangelism Motto

Every man, woman and child has been "died for," therefore, has been reconciled.

APPENDIX R

HANDOUT # 5

MY PERSONAL TESTIMONY⁵

1. My life before receiving Christ:
2. How I realized I needed Christ:
3. How I received Jesus Christ:
4. How Jesus makes my life meaningful:

⁵Taken from the Lay Evangelism School Student Handbook. Lay Evangelism is a Discipleship Training program of the Southern Baptist Convention.

APPENDIX S

HANDOUT #6

THE GOSPEL HAND⁶

C. GOD'S PROVISION

John 14:5

B. OUR NEED

Rom. 3:23

D. OUR RESPONSE

John 1:12

E. OUR PRAYER

Rom. 10:13

A. GOD'S PURPOSE

John 3:16

1. Receive
eternal life
as a free gift.
Rom. 6:23

2. Live a full
and
meaningful
life.
John 10:10

3. Spend
eternity
with Jesus
in Heaven.
John 14:3

1. We are
all sinners.
Rom. 3:23

2. We
cannot save
ourselves.
Eph. 2:9

3. We
deserve
death and
hell.
Rom. 6:23

1. Jesus is
God who
became
man.
John 1:1,14

2. Jesus
died for us.
1 Pet. 3:18
Isa. 53:8

3. Jesus
rose from
the dead.
Rom. 4:25

1. We must
repent.
Acts 3:19
Acts 26:20

2. We must
have faith in
Jesus.
Eph. 2:8
Jas. 2:19

3. We must
commit our
lives to
Jesus as
Lord.
Rom. 10:9,10

1. Prayer
for
Under-
standing.

2. Prayer of
Commit-
ment.

3. Prayer of
Thanks-
giving.

THE GOSPEL

⁶Taken from MasterLife Discipleship Training Manual. MasterLife is a Discipleship Training Program by Avery Willis of the Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention.

APPENDIX T

LOVE ZION BAPTIST CHURCH MISSIONS MINISTRY SURVEY

1. Do you live in this neighborhood ,or do you commute to Love Zion?
If yes, how many miles (one way) do you commute? .
2. How long have you been associated with Love Zion? _____ years.
3. How did you come to be associated with Love Zion?

A. Through family.	H. Charter member.
B. Married into.	I. Sunday School.
C. Through a friend.	J. Youth Fellowship.
D. Minister's efforts.	K. Family crisis.
E. A church Program.	L. Special Talent
F. Resident of community.	M. Through advertisement.
G. Denominational tie	N. Other
4. What needs has Love Zion met for you?
5. What needs do you still have?
6. What values do you believe Love Zion offers to people?
7. What values are lacking?
8. What do you believe are the primary needs in this neighborhood?
9. How does Love Zion do in meeting neighborhood needs?
 Poor Fair Average Above average Excellent
10. If someone were to ask you, "What is the missions ministry of Love Zion?" How would you answer? .
11. What are the greatest missionary strengths of Love Zion?
12. What are love Zion's greatest missionary weaknesses?
13. Do you or someone close to you have a problem providing basic needs for your (his/her) family? Yes , No .

If your answer is yes, please circle as many as apply.

A. Food B. Housing C. Clothing D. Other

14. Do you have other needs that the Missions Ministry may be able to help you with?

15. Would you like someone to visit and pray with you? Yes No

16. If you would like to make any additional comments please include them here.

If you have questions about this survey, please direct them to the Rev. Bennie Henson through the church secretary.

Thanks for your time and cooperation.

Optional:

Name

Address

Phone

APPENDIX U

LOVE ZION BAPTIST CHURCH NEIGHBORHOOD SURVEY

1. Please describe your household by answering the following:

A. Number of years you have lived in this neighborhood?

B. Your age group. 20-30, 31-40, 41-50, 51-60, 61-70,
71-99

C. Number of children still living at Home? (Under 20)
Please give their ages.

2. Please indicate your Church tradition or affiliation.

Baptist	Church of God	Presbyterian
Catholic	Lutheran	United Methodist
Christian	Nazarene	AME
Church of Christ	Pentecostal	Other

3. Are you presently active in any church? Yes No

4. Have you or any member of your family ever been in the Love Zion Baptist Church building? Yes No

5. Indicate which of the following activities you have participated in at Love Zion Baptist Church since living here.

Bible Study	Nursery School	Vacation Bible School.
Civic Meeting	Scouts	Wedding
Worship Service	Funeral	Sports Event
Women's Group	Special Service	Youth Program
Sunday School	Love Academy	Other

6. Do you know anyone who attends Love Zion? Yes No

7. Have you ever been invited to participate in any activity at Love Zion?
Yes No

8. Based on your experience to what degree do the following best describe Love Zion Baptist Church:

NOT AT ALL SOMEWHAT VERY MUCH NOT SURE

- A. Attractive building
- B. Available in crisis
- C. Christian witness
- D. Friendly people
- E. Helps people in need
- F. Meaningful worship
- G. Pastor approachable
- H. Place to meet neighbors
- I. Quality Sunday School
- J. Visitors welcome

9. If Love Zion had the resources to assist you in your special needs, would you be willing to let us help? Please check all that apply.

- A. Alcohol or substance abuse B. Domestic violence/Abuse C. Child care
- D. Illiteracy E. Employment opportunities F. Hunger G. Other

11. If you would like to make any additional comments, please include them here.

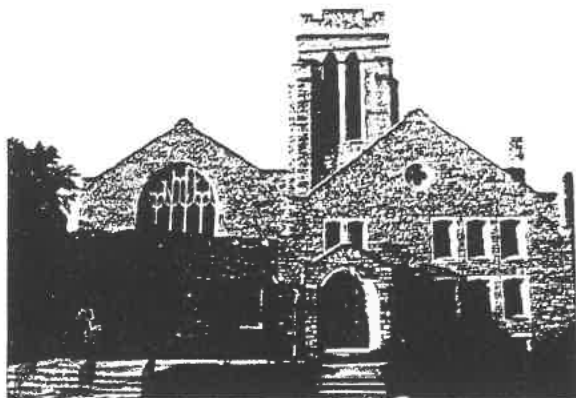
Thanks for your time and cooperation. Please return to the Love Zion Baptist Church, 1459 Madison Ave. Columbus, Ohio 43205-1580, telephone number (614) 2582216.

Optional:

Name

Address

Phone



Love Zion ¹³⁷ Baptist Church

1459 Madison Avenue • Columbus, Ohio 43205-1580

Dial-A-Prayer: 258-7445

Office: (614) 258-2216

Home: [REDACTED]

Rev. Jesse L. Wood, Pastor

APPENDIX V

January 3, 1996

Trinity Lutheran Seminary
2199 East Main Street
Columbus, Ohio 43209
[REDACTED]

Dear Mr. [REDACTED]:

This letter is in reference to our conversation concerning the use of the Koinonia for our annual "Feast of Hope" to be held on April 27, 1996 at 5:00 p.m.

As I mentioned, the "Feast of Hope" is an annual, ecumenical, and a city wide event that hopefully will raise the consciousness of the "church" in the areas of hunger and homelessness. All proceeds will be used to help meet the needs of the under privileged.

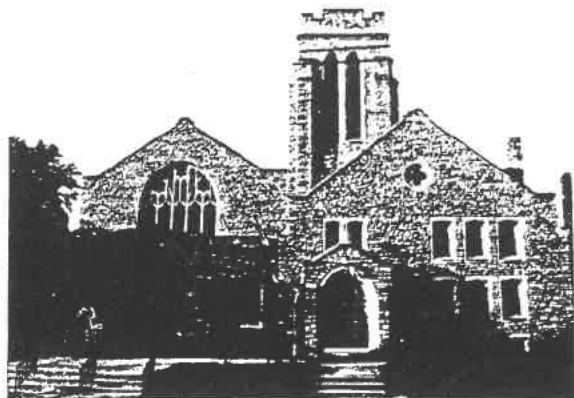
Let me thank you up-front for the use of the facility. As we anticipate the number of attendees compared to last years, it is prudent to seek more space. As I also mentioned, we will only need the banquet hall because the catering will come from Love Zion in order keep the cost down.

We would be honored to have President Anderson as our special guest. Also, I hope that others from the seminary will mark their calendars for this life-changing event.

In His matchless name,

Rev. Bennie T. Henson, Sr.
Director of Missions

"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."
St. John 15:13



Love Zion Baptist Church

138

1459 Madison Avenue • Columbus, Ohio 43205-1580

Dial-A-Prayer: 258-7445

Office: (614) 258-2216

Home: [REDACTED]

Rev. Jesse L. Wood, Pastor

April 7, 1996

Dear Pastor and Congregation:

Love Zion Baptist Church is presenting the annual **"Feast of Hope"** on April 27, 1996 at 5:30 p.m. at Trinity Lutheran Seminary, 2199 East Main Street, Columbus, Ohio. The event is ecumenical by design. The event is hosted at Trinity **Lutheran** Seminary and is sponsored by Love Zion **Baptist** Church.

Dr. Eugene Lundy, the keynote speaker, is the pastor of the Church of Christ of the **Apostolic** Faith and a medical doctor. The Rev. Rosunde' Cummings Nichols, a **United Methodist** pastor, will give a special rendition of the creation story.

Our goal is to raise the consciousness of the whole body of Christ on the need to be more actionable in the fight against homelessness and hopelessness.

All proceeds will go for the cause of providing substance for the marginalized on local and global bases: Open Shelter, Faith Mission, Friends of the Friendless, the Lott Carey Foreign Mission and Servants' Heart Ministries of Jamaica, West Indies.

The public is invited to attend. Ticket prices are \$10.00 (dinner included). Free parking is available in the seminary parking lot on College Avenue. Contact Flora Anthony at 258-2216.

In His matchless name,

Rev. Bennie T. Henson, Sr.
Director of Mission

"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."
St. John 15:13

**THE “VISIONS OF HOPE” MISSIONS MINISTRY
OF LOVE ZION BAPTIST CHURCH**

PRESENTS

THE ANNUAL “FEAST OF HOPE”

On April 27, 1996 at 5:30 p.m.

**AT TRINITY LUTHERAN SEMINARY
2199 East Main St. Columbus, Ohio**

KEYNOTE SPEAKER:

**Pastor Eugene Lundy, MD, MBA, D.D.
Of the Church of Christ of the Apostolic Faith**

SPECIAL GUEST:

**Rosunde Cummings Nichols
United Methodist Pastor and Recording Artist**

PRICE:

\$10.00 Per Person (dinner included)

PURPOSE:

Awareness as to the plight of the hungry and homeless

CONTACT:

Sis. Flora Anthony at (614) 258-2216

APPENDIX W**POST-TEST: Mission Sensitivity**

Please answer each question as honestly as possible. Choose one answer for each question.

1. The Word Gospel means:
☐ forgiveness
☐ good news
☐ salvation
☐ soul-winner
2. Personal evangelism (witnessing) refers to:
☐ a weekly visitation program of the local church.
☐ an individual Christian witnessing to lost persons.
☐ an enrollment of lost persons in Sunday School.
☐ a program started by the Baptist Convention of America, Inc.
3. Do you think that personal mission should be a top priority of our church:
☐ yes
☐ no
4. Is outreach ministry a top priority in your life at this present time?
☐ yes
☐ no
5. When was the last time you witnessed to a lost person?
☐ within the last week
☐ within the last month
☐ within the last six months
☐ more than six months
☐ never
6. Is the church inclusive to poor, needy and the socially outcast.
☐ yes
☐ no
7. Have you ever had any training in how to be an effective witness for Christ?
☐ yes
☐ no
8. Have you actually led another person to Christ as Savior?
☐ yes

- ___ no
9. I believe Christians should be concerned for the unsaved and unchurched of our community.
___ yes
___ no
10. I believe it is acceptable for some Christians to live their faith and never verbally share the gospel.
___ yes
___ no
11. I believe more Christians would witness if they were properly trained and motivated.
___ yes
___ no
12. Personal evangelism (witnessing) is not primarily something you do, but what you are, as a believer.
___ yes
___ no
13. A close, personal relationship to God enables a Christian to be a missionary.
___ yes
___ no
14. What is the main reason you do not witness?
___ I do not believe it is my task as a Christian.
___ I do not want to be considered fanatic.
___ I fear embarrassment, rejection, and failure.
___ I do not know how to start and what to say.
___ I do not love lost people as I should.
15. I should develop friendships because the Gospel is received better in context of relationships.
___ yes
___ no
16. I look for situations and needs in which I can share my faith in Jesus Christ.
___ yes
___ no
17. I am confident that the local community is as important as the foreign

mission field.

☐ yes
☐ no

18. If I witness to a lost person and he/she decides not to accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, then I have failed as a witness.

☐ yes
☐ no

19. A real love for God will have a corresponding love for people.

☐ yes
☐ no

20. God will save sinners because God gives the church the necessary gifts and talents to reach people who are lost.

☐ yes
☐ no

21. God does not expect me to witness to persons who are different from me in age, sex, status, or race.

☐ yes
☐ no

22. I believe that some people are just too "worldly" to waste time on in trying to missionize.

☐ yes
☐ no

23. I believe that my gift is money. My giving is my contribution to making Christ available to the lost.

☐ yes
☐ no

24. I have important responsibilities such as family, job and neighbors that I should consider before I witness to lost persons.

☐ yes
☐ no

25. I know a plan of salvation that I can verbally share with another person.

☐ yes
☐ no

26. Which one of the following is true?
☐ Only certain trained Christians are real missionaries.
☐ Laymen are ministers of Christ and are as responsible for the lost as pastors.
☐ God desires to use only media and revivals to evangelize the world.
☐ Worship and fellowship are always more important than preaching and outreach ministry.
27. Which answer best defines sources of power in witnessing?
☐ clean life, good reputation, and education.
☐ regular church attendance, tithing, and prayer.
☐ prayer, scripture memory, and willingness
☐ education, scripture memory, and clean life
28. I believe that personal follow-up in evangelism is vital.
☐ yes
☐ no
29. I believe that it is important for new believers to learn how to witness as soon as possible.
☐ yes
☐ no
30. If I desire to be in closer fellowship with God, I can:
☐ neglect personal witnessing for lost persons.
☐ pray that God will give that task to someone else.
☐ substitute other spiritual disciplines for witnessing.
☐ grow as an active, loving witness to lost persons.

POST-TEST

RESULTS FROM 60 QUESTIONNAIRES

All responses represent percentages

- | | | | |
|----|--------------------------------|-----|---------------------|
| 1. | 90 - correct
10 - incorrect | 16. | 91 - yes
12 - no |
| 2. | 88 - correct | 17. | 86 - yes |

- | | | | |
|-----|--|-----|--|
| | 12 - incorrect | | 14 - no |
| 3. | 94 - yes
6 - yes | 18. | 2 - yes
98 - no |
| 4. | 76 - yes
24 - no | 19. | 100 - yes
0 - no
0 - do not know |
| 5. | 55 - last week
28 - last month
9 - last six months
8 - over six months
0 - never | 20. | 70 - yes
30 - no
2 - do not know |
| 6. | 100 - yes
0 - no | 21. | 14 - yes
86 - no
2 - do not know |
| 7. | 90 - yes
10 - no | 22. | 93 - yes
7 - no
0 - do not know |
| 8. | 70 - yes
30 - no
0 - do not know | 23. | 75 - yes
25 - no
0 - do not know |
| 9. | 100 - yes
0 - no | 24. | 53 - yes
47 - no
0 - do not know |
| 10. | 3 - yes
97 - no | 25. | 92 - yes
8 - no
0 - do not know |
| 11. | 100 - yes
0 - no | 26. | 73 - correct
27 - incorrect |
| 12. | 87 - yes
13 - no
0 - do not know | 27. | 74 - correct
26 - incorrect |
| 13. | 100 - yes
0 - no | 28. | 90 - yes
3 - no |
| 14. | 79 - no answer
0 - #1 | | |

- 0 - #2
10 - #3
11 - #4
0 - #5
15. 92 - yes
8 - no
0 - do not know
- 7 - do not know
29. 94 - yes
6 - no
0 - do not know
- 30 91 - correct
9 - incorrect

APPENDIX X

LOVE ZION BAPTIST CHURCH NEWSLETTER

Vol. 1 No. 1

MARCH 31, 1996

CHRONICLES OF HOPE

Visions of Hope Missions Ministry

Annual "Feast of Hope" at Trinity Lutheran Seminary

The event is ecumenical and citywide. All proceeds go for the cause of providing substance for the marginalized on a local and global bases. Locally, a portion of the proceeds will go to the Open Shelter, Faith Mission, and Friends of the Friendless; globally: the Lott Carey Foreign Mission and Servants' Heart Ministries of Jamaica, West Indies.

The event brings together four churches; it is hosted at Trinity Lutheran Seminary, sponsored by Love Zion Baptist Church, the keynote speaker is a Pastor and a medical doctor from the Church of Christ of the Apostolic Faith, and the special guest is a United Methodist pastor. The basic strategy is that each church has the capability to disseminate by word of mouth the growing concerns of hunger and homelessness. Also, each church involved will help its congregants focus on the need to be actionable in their respective communities.

The date is April 27, 1996 at 5:30 p.m. The price is \$10.00 (dinner included). Pastor Rosunde Cummings Nichols will recite a rendition of the Creation Story.

Challenged at Franklin County JD Center

During the visits this quarter to Franklin County Juvenile Detention Center, we encountered many challenges, but the one that stands out the most is the visit where a young man said, "Why should I have hope. I am destined to be a 'Thug.' My daddy is in the big house and my mother is on drugs. My brother is here and my cousin too. Crime is all that we know."

The prison ministry is confronted with many life-changing events like the one described above that confirms that there is much work to be done in the area of attitude transformation. Thanks for your continued support.

Faith Mission says thanks

We participated in a feed the hungry campaign last month by offering a gift of \$100.00. Faith Mission responds:

"Thank you for helping us reach out to hungry and homeless people and helping feed and shelter them. God bless you."

Visions of Hope push for action in Columbus

Mission members from Love Zion are active in pushing for actionable sensitivity throughout the city of Columbus. During the last quarter, delegates were sent to First District, City Missions, and EUMBA to help raise the consciousness.

Mission Team gathers for "Feast" Kick Off

Meet the missions team on March 31, 1996, after morning service, in the MLK Fellowship Hall. A variety of salads and desserts will be available. Your contributions will help to offset the cost of the banquet. We thank you in advance for your support.

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